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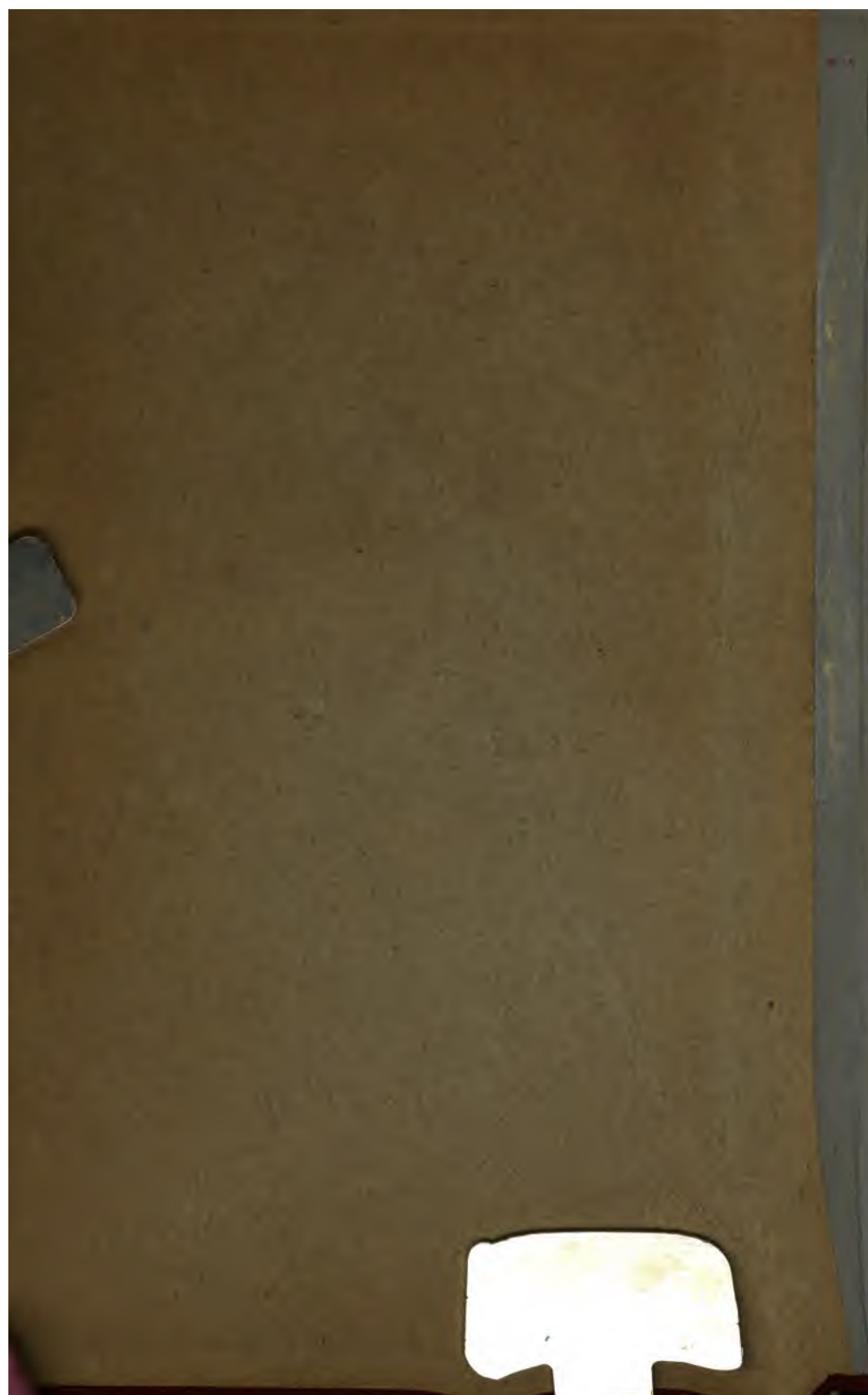
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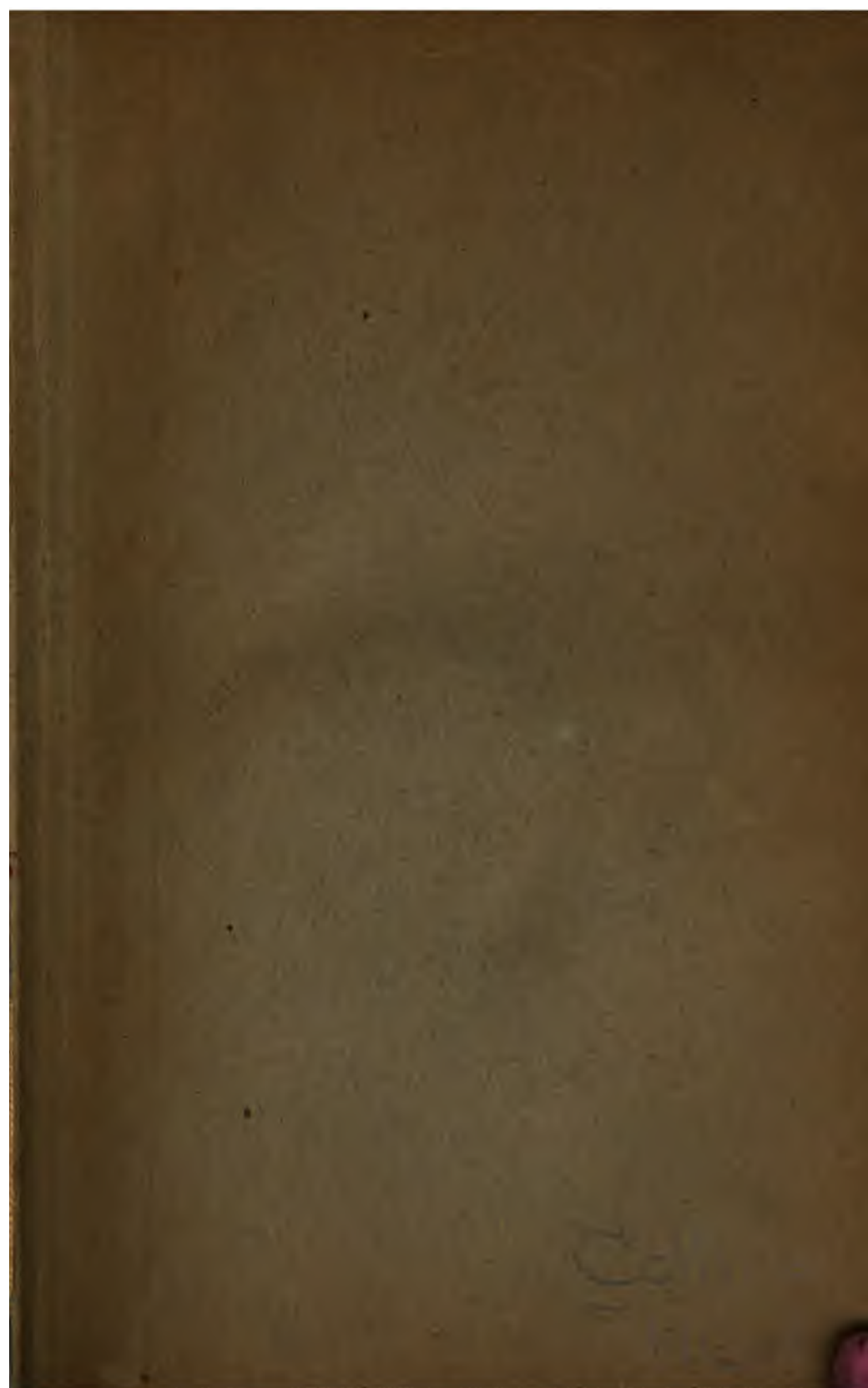
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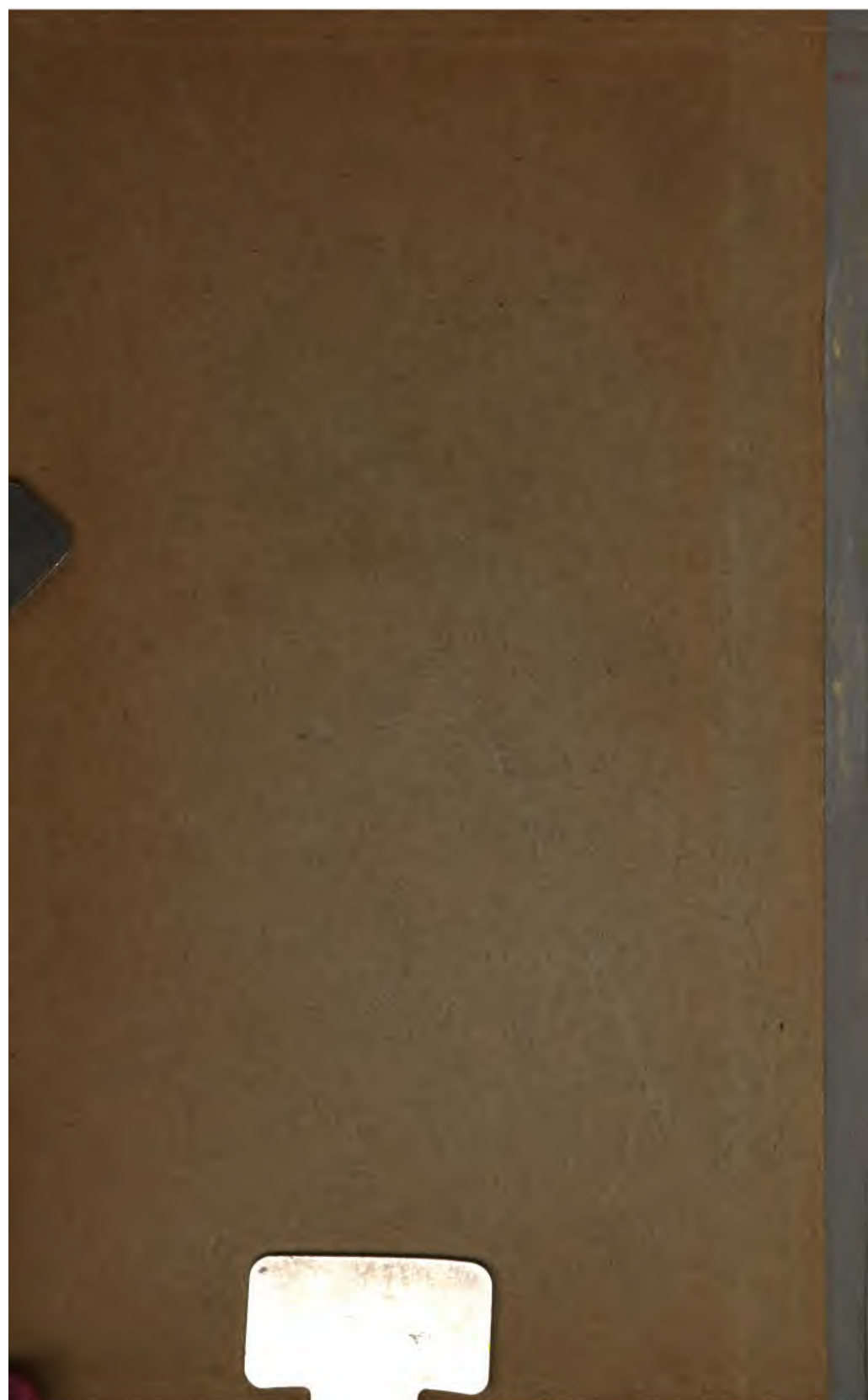


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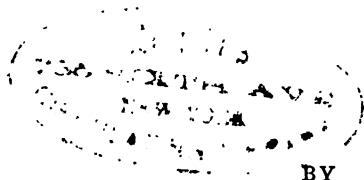
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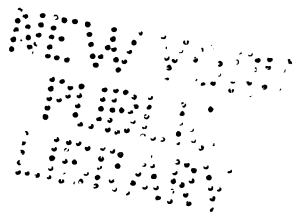
# THE VIVIAN ROMANCE.



BY

MORTIMER COLLINS.

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# THE VIVIAN ROMANCE.

## CHAPTER I.

### NUMBER ONE.

"L'Hymen, dit-on, craint les petits cousins."

VALENTINE VIVIAN was a noticeable man—as Wordsworth said of Coleridge—yet the first thing one noticed about him was his dress. He was sitting, when I desire to introduce him to the reader, in a peculiarly easy lounging-chair, placed in a wide window overlooking a superb sweep of scenery whose beauty was intensified by a summer sunset. Long slopes of perfect lawn were bounded by a ha-ha; and there was a noble park beyond, studded with great oak-trees, populous with deer; and a river, one of England's many Avons, bounded the view. Broadoak Avon is a great estate, as dwellers in the midland counties know full well; and t' Squire of Broadoak Avon well deserves his princely heritage. But I have not yet come to the Squire.

Now, as to Valentine Vivian's dress. His coat was of violet velvet; his waistcoat of a brocaded silk, with gold buttons, and in each button a diamond; his trowsers of a lavender cloth. Round his neck he wore a cravat of wondrous lace, and ruffles of the same hid the smallest and whitest hand in the world. Then how perfect a Wellington boot of polished leather concealed his Lilliputian foot! Vivian was altogether Lilliputian. Never, probably, did so ambitious and energetic a spirit find so small a human habitation.

Vivian had long, bright yellow hair, curling over his shoulders, with a silken Vandyck beard to match, and the softest of golden mustaches. His eyes were large, as blue as steel, as keen as a Toledo rapier. You could not see his upper lip for the golden growth above it; but it was of perfect form, like Apollo's bow; while the lower lip, ruddy and voluptuous, made one think of Sir John Suckling.

Valentine Vivian had a companion—a huge mastiff, twice his own weight at least, who bore the name of Thor. Vivian, as the sunset grew deeper in the west, and tinged with saffron and purple the winding Avon, was lazily smoking a cigarette, and glancing at a volume of Alfred de Musset's poems. I think the book was open at one of the Madrid lyrics, wherein was melodious-

ly passionate mention of a certain Andalusian Marquise.

Presently the door opened, and lady Eva Redfern entered.

Lady Eva, sole daughter of the Marquis of Alvescott, and wife of Rupert Redfern, of Broadoak Avon, was a perfect creature of the Artemis type, lithe and lissom, fluent and flexible. Tall and swift and slender, there was no touch of Brobdingnag in her build; she was the very reflex of the inviolate Huntress. Brown eyes had she, and brown hair of divine softness, and a bust of voluptuous curve, and long, light, delicate hands, with a rosy tinge in the flesh of them.

She was twenty-five, Lady Eva. Rupert Redfern, the Squire, was about forty-five. I suppose I must describe the Squire.

He was a man about six feet three inches high, with a portentous stoop in gigantic shoulders. He was huge every way. Mentally or physically, there was nothing babyish about Rupert Redfern. He had taken a double first at Oxford, rather easily. He had pulled stroke in the University boat, and pulled such a stroke that the University did not soon forget it. And now he managed his great estates in a massive magnificent fashion, making the farmers his friends, and the farm-laborers his abject worshippers. He was generous, was the Squire. He would not have misery among his dependents. And, giant though he was, being as tender as a woman, he was quite at home in the cottages of the poor.

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie."

'Tis not a bad place to find love, if, like Squire Redfern, you set about it in the right way.

Valentine Vivian was ten years older than his beautiful cousin, Eva, though he certainly did not appear so. The Marquis of Alvescott and Sir Alured Vivian married sisters; and, as Lady Vivian died early, and the baronet did not want to be bored by his boy, Valentine was quite at home at Alvescott Manor. Well, cousinship is very nice. When Eva was fifteen, she was a prodigious little romp. She was the perfect fulfillment of Robert Brough's *Neighbor Nelly*.

"She is tall, and growing taller,  
She is vigorous of limb;  
You should see her playing cricket  
With her little brother Jim."



But, as there was no brother Jim in her case, she was wont to victimize her cousin, Valentine. The Marquis was a devotee of the turf; the Marchioness was a confirmed invalid; and Lady Eva's governess, Miss Lister, was her most obedient slave. The said governess, when first she came to Alvescott, had endeavored to enforce regularity and propriety; but nothing would have effected this short of actual corporal punishment; and Lady Eva could much more easily have inflicted this on the governess than the governess on her. So Miss Lister prudently accepted the situation, taught her pupil when her pupil was inclined to learn, and obeyed orders excellently. Lady Eva, however, was not idle. There were times when she chose to learn, and things which she liked to learn; and, as she had free access to her father's splendid library, she got a fair sort of irregular education.

Eva at fifteen or sixteen was a romp; at seventeen or eighteen she had developed into a flirt. People who remembered her the most reckless of young hoydens, were amazed at her sudden acquirement of dignity and stateliness. Putting her into long dresses seemed immediately to have made a woman of her. There was only one person who would not accept the change—her cousin, Valentine. He laughed at her airs and graces, and insisted on regarding her as just the mere child she was a year or two previously. It was very provoking, but Valentine was unmanageable. He would not resign any privilege of cousinship; he would treat her as if she were a little girl. He never condescended to flirt with her, and certainly never made love to her. This last he might have done with impunity, perhaps with success, for the Marchioness would have been delighted to see the cousins married; while the Marquis thought a good deal more about a bay filly that he had named after his daughter, than about the young lady herself. But Valentine was not a marrying man. He liked to be on easy terms with his cousin, but had not the remotest idea of making serious love to her. He teased her abominably.

By-and-by the time came for Lady Eva to be a bride. She had plenty of wooers, be sure; and when she chose Squire Redfern from among them, a good many of the insolent young sprigs of fashion who had followed her professed to be perfectly shocked. The Squire was forty, at least—double her age; he was immensely rich, which showed how mercenary she was. He was a man who liked to live on his estates and look after his people; so she vanished from society, and went to live a quiet life down at Broadoak Avon.

Five years had passed since their marriage. There were no children. Vivian, during that period, had seen but little of his cousin: he had been abroad for long intervals, he said; at any rate, he was very seldom seen in England, but had been encountered both in Paris and Baden. He had, however, been heard of in England.

He had fought a duel in the Bois de Boulogne, thereby earning a half-column of Whitehurst. He had written a couple of volumes of verse—one at Venice, the other at Rome. The Venetian brochure was a witty wicked story in octave rhyme—the rhyme of Pulci and Byron: while at Rome he had gone in for passionate lyrics and lurid ironies. Both books were good enough as works of art—were the product, indeed, of a volatile, versatile, vivacious mind; and were deservedly maltreated by the sensible and sagacious critics of London. Those critics, as we all have excellent reason for knowing, are grave and serious men, who sternly disapprove of immoralities and levities. They object (and who shall gainsay them?) to the whimsical fantasies of an effervescent mind. This is a world for statistics and didactics; a world in which he is a god who can make money, and he is a demi-god who can write a money article. And it is clearly wicked to tolerate persons who come into such a world to waste their own and other people's money, to draw caricatures and write exciting lyrics.

But "dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" And because thou art solemn and stupid, preferring small-beer to all other liquids, shall there henceforth be no effervescence of Champagne? I think otherwise. I have an enormous reverence for the tribe of statisticians; but I confess, when Vivian's thin volume of amorous octaves came home from Venice, I put aside a most interesting article by Mr. Newmarch, and read it right through before I went to bed. I am half ashamed to acknowledge such frivolity.

This was the sort of thing:

"In a right Protestant mood, extremely bitter,  
I watched the purple proud procession swerving  
Through the white street, and marked the priestly  
glitter,  
And then I saw one girl, with bosom curving  
Voluptuously, and graceful figure, flitter  
For Pagan days than ours. Had Edward Irving  
Such sensuous syllogism to urge, I hope  
He very quickly would convert the Pope."

Sheer shallow nonsense this, as we all know. After reading a couple of hundred such stanzas, imagine the gusto wherewith I returned to Newmarch!

Returning to England, Vivian found himself made very welcome by his cousin's husband. He came to Broadoak for a week, and staid for months. The Squire, in fact, would not let him go away. So, although he had rooms in town, he was seldom to be met with except just in the height of the season. He wasted his time in rhyming and singing (he had a divine tenor voice), sketching and smoking; but, by way of letting off a little superfluous steam, he was in the habit of taking long lonely rides every day. A perfect horseman, and the lightest of light weights, he enjoyed long hours in the saddle more than any thing else in the world.

"Lazy as usual, Val," said his cousin, when

she entered. "Won't you come and walk with me? I am going to visit some old women."

"Poor child! I hope somebody will come and visit you when you are an old woman. Where's the Squire?"

"He went over to Riverdale, to attend a meeting of magistrates. There have been a series of burglaries lately, and people are getting quite frightened."

"To be sure, I remember. I wish they'd try this place. It would be a nice break in one's ennui."

"Well, see if you can get rid of a little of your ennui by walking with me to the village. It will do you good."

"Will it? I don't know. However, I'll come if I may smoke. I won't carry tracts and beef-tea, please to observe. You are not going very far, of course; it is getting too late."

"I have just one or two old folks that I want to see before dinner. There is plenty of time. Rupert won't be back till the last moment, I expect."

So the cousins started for the village, on whose outskirts Lady Eva had a couple of her pet pensioners to relieve. They arrived at a comfortable red-brick cottage in a pleasant garden. Just across the road there was a stile entering a path through Squire Redfern's woods—beautiful beech-woods, populous with pheasants. On this stile Vivian sat and smoked his cigarette, while Lady Eva paid her philogynic visit.

As he sat there, indolent of mood, a shrill sharp whistle sounded through the copse. It was a whistle unique of its kind—not the sort of music which bucolic boys utter with unskilled lips. It caused Vivian to spring over the stile and look curiously into the depths of the wood. He perceived advancing along one of the paths a slight, agile man, in a blue dress with brass buttons, bearing all the marks of able seamanship. There was instant recognition.

"Well, Mark, what is it?" he asked.

"You are badly wanted, sir. The men are making fools of themselves. Could you come to-night?"

"Will two o'clock do?" he asked.

"Very well, indeed. I will tell them you are coming."

Although this brisk sailor vanished as rapidly as he appeared, Lady Eva Redfern noticed him as she left the cottage. She asked her cousin what he was.

"Only a beggar," he replied. "There are always plenty of them on the road."

"I hope he wasn't a poacher," she said. "Rupert detests poachers."

"He was dressed like a sailor," said Vivian. "I believe your swell poachers prefer to dress like dignitaries of the Church."

They walked home together through the summer twilight. The Squire's mail phaeton had just reached the door as they arrived. When they sat down to dinner, Mr. Redfern was full of the magistrates' conference at which he had

been present. Riverdale and the whole county were consternated. For weeks past there had been the most daring burglaries and highway robberies. A skillful gang were at work, evidently. Plate and jewelry had been stolen from half a dozen great houses. There was not a farmer in the county who dared ride home alone from market. Mr. Severne, the chief constable of Riverdale, who had never been baffled before, was utterly baffled now.

"I never heard of so perfect an organization," said the Squire. "They seem to know exactly when and exactly where to make their burglarious attacks. They ransacked the plate-chest at Chillum House, going straight in and straight out, as if the butler had shown them the way. They stopped poor Henderson, the lawyer, on the loneliest part of his road home, with two hundred sovereigns in gold in his valise. I don't believe the old boy had had so much gold about him for years. They are doing the thing so cleverly that the police are perfectly puzzled and perplexed."

"I sometimes think it would be rather fun to be a detective," said Vivian.

"We have a wonderfully clever fellow in Severne," said the Squire. "He's a gentleman, and a Cambridge man, and seems to have taken to the business from mere liking. He'll catch these fellows in time, I feel certain."

"Let us hope so," replied Valentine. "But I am weary of these thieves. Let us have some coffee and music. If the scoundrels would attack us here, I should feel disposed to forgive them."

So there followed one of the pleasant indolent evenings which are the delight of English country life. Lady Eva gave her husband and cousin their coffee; and then there was an interval of Mendelssohn and Rossini, Vivian's glorious tenor doing wondrous work; and then they sat a while, chatting over the great excitement of the day—the mysterious systematic robberies.

"Your stories are alarming," said Vivian to the Squire, drinking his final draught of iced seltzer. "I shall load my revolver to-night."

Which indeed he did. Arriving in his chamber, he took from its case a very elegant little six-shooter and charged it carefully. Then he quietly divested himself of the elegant attire in which we have seen him, and put on a business-like riding-dress—top-boots, buckskin breeches, and a close-fitting coat. Then he sat a while, smoking a big regalia, and meditating.

By-and-by, having finished his cigar, he rose from his lounging-chair, took a big gulp of brandy-and-water, and descended stealthily through the corridors, which were dim and silent. He had keys for all doors that he desired to pass. He made his way to the stables, and reached a stall wherein stood a coal-black mare, nearly thorough-bred. She whinnied at his approach. He saddled her, led her out, locked the stable door behind him, and rode away rapidly.

There was a bright full moon. Vivian rode for the most part across open moorland soft to the mare's tread, fragrant to the rider's nostril. About three hours' travel brought him to a large town, a quaint old-fashioned town when you reached the centre of it. He rode through back streets till he came to a narrow alley, at whose entrance a man was waiting. Vivian dismounted, left his horse in this man's care without saying a word, and walked down the alley.

Half-way down a door opened the moment he reached it. He entered, and was in the small parlor, apparently, of a public-house. It was a room about fifteen feet square, and there were in it about a dozen of the most truculent ruffians you ever saw, smoking the most villainous tobacco you ever smelt.

As Vivian entered the room every man rose to receive him.

## CHAPTER II.

### NUMBER TWO.

"In town a maid da zee muore life,  
An' I don't underriate her,  
But ten to oome the sprackest wife  
'S a farmer's woldest daeter."

HALF a mile from Squire Redfern's park gates, on a beautiful reach of the Avon, is Broad-oak Mill Farm. It is as quaint a place as you would wish to see. The farm-house and the mill, both ancient timbered buildings of red brick, are on opposite sides of the river, which is crossed by a narrow wooden bridge. Old Ralph Ashow is farmer and miller also—a warm man, no doubt, with an account at Riverdale Bank, and, it is commonly believed, a hoard of guineas in his strong-box at home. But his choicest possession, in his own opinion and in that of the young farmers of the vicinage, is his daughter Mary, a charming little coquette of eighteen.

She is sitting now under the great mulberry-tree in the old-fashioned garden, where bloom the dear old homely flowers which modern horticulturists despise. Pigeons are flying, a many-colored flock, through the sunlit air, and there is a drowsy hum of bees from the long row of straw hives beneath the southern wall. Half in shadow and half in shine, Mary Ashow is knitting under the mulberry-tree—a *petite* figure, yet plump and rounded, with blond hair and watchet eyes, and a rosy, laughing face. She wears a light print dress, but her white arms are bare; her sole ornament is a maiden-blush rose at her bosom. I wish I could sketch her under that grand old tree, with eyes that try to look demure under their long lashes, and lips that will betray those eyes by pouting into an incipient laugh. Mary was as gay as a bird, and as busy as a bee—a model farmer's daughter. Every now and then she would burst into a snatch of song—not echoes of opera or quasi-comic chanson from the casino, but fanciful

fragments of old ballads, the work of forgotten singers in distant, simple days. "Silly sooth" are such rhymes as these, no doubt:

"Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,  
Sweet was its smell and bonny was its hue,  
And the longer it blossomed the sweeter it grew,  
For the lily in the bud will be bonny yet."

But when you hear them wedded to simple melodies, and sung by a sweet soft voice under a mulberry-tree, they have a magic of their own.

So at least thought John Grainger, a distant relation of Farmer Ashow's, who was living with him to learn the art and mystery of farming. John was only a few months older than Mary, and so of course was as bashful as possible in her presence. He was a stalwart fellow from Westmoreland, as strong as a bull and a great deal uglier. His hideous, honest face, with eyes hidden under heavy eyebrows, and a nose that turned up as if there were Irish blood in him, and a mouth some sizes too large, made one think of an ogre. He had the best temper and appetite and the roughest head of hair in the world. He was a studious youth, with a great liking for mathematics, botany, and chemistry. When he came of age he would have money enough to take a good-sized farm; and his friends thought he would be likely to succeed in Australia. He had been disposed to agree with them, before he came to live at Broad-oak Mill Farm, and to see Mary Ashow every day.

It was afternoon, and at four o'clock precisely the farmer and John Grainger would come to tea. Mary saw the time by the turret clock over the mill-door, and sprang from her seat, and went away singing to make the necessary preparations. A pleasant summer parlor opened on the garden, and here the meal was set: bright silver and curious old china appeared on the table; the tea was fragrant; the butter and cream delicious; the virgin honey full of floral flavor. The young mistress of the farm did her ministrations deftly, fascinating poor John Grainger to such an extent that he was always making some absurd mistake—swallowing his tea at its hottest, or committing some other awkwardness. The farmer was a macilent man, who looked as if he had been in a good many storms, and had only grown the harder for the encounter. People were wont to say that old Ashow was as tough as ash. He certainly looked so.

"They've not caught these house-breakers yet, I'm told," he remarked to his daughter. "We shall have them here some night, Mary. Mind you lock yourself up carefully."

"I'm not worth the trouble of carrying away," she said. "They're more likely to look for your money, father."

"I don't think they'll find very much," replied the old gentleman. "I should not like them to get at the silver, though; it has been so long in the family."

"It is always carefully locked up," said Mary. "Aye, but they're so cunning. They got at

the plate-chest at Chilham, you know. I shall be glad when the rascals are caught, for they are giving a great deal of trouble. The police must be mighty stupid, or they would have had them long ago."

"Mr. Severne's a clever man," said John Grainger. "He was a first-rate mathematician at college."

"Mathematics won't catch thieves, in my opinion," oracularly observed the farmer. "Unless your wise chief constable could cast a nativity, as the astrologers do. But I suppose he's above all that sort of thing."

Farmer Ashow was always very hard on Grainger about his favorite studies. The youngster was really a good mathematician for a self-taught student; moreover, he invested his spare money in chemical apparatus; and from his solitary room there sometimes came sounds of explosion or odors of noxious gas. Half in earnest and half in jest, the farmer was wont to laugh at these vagaries of his.

"You'll never calculate the weather by algebra," the old man would say, "nor manure your fields with those nasty-smelling gases. And you'll either addle your brains with figures, or blow yourself to pieces with some of your combustibles."

The second prediction was nearly fulfilled once or twice. Grainger was ambitious, and had a fancy for blowing hydrogen soap-bubbles, and making chloride of nitrogen and so forth. Consequently there was sometimes a great smash of retort and crucible, and our chemical adventurer got burnt fingers and scorched eyebrows—nothing worse as yet. And, as he good-humoredly was wont to remark, nothing of that sort could spoil his beauty.

On the present occasion he was warm in defense of Chief Constable Severne, whom he greatly admired. What he knew of him was simply this: there was a Mechanics' Institute at Riverdale. Grainger, in pursuit of his mathematical studies, had gone thither to pore over certain books of reference. They were old-fashioned books, as a matter of course; the libraries of such institutions are usually ill-chosen. Grainger had just reached that period at the entry to mathematics when the Calculus has to be attempted; he could find no book that treated the subject otherwise than as *Fluxions*. He asked the librarian's guidance, but that person was wholly uninstructed. He was, however, good-natured; so he offered to inquire of Mr. Severne, who came there to look at the papers, and who bore a mathematical reputation. The Chief Constable, interested in the young student, lent him some books, and did what was even of more value—give him a few hints how to use them. The man who strives to teach himself any subject has difficulties unimaginable to more fortunate students; and this is especially the case with mathematics.

John Grainger was amazed to find how his perplexities disappeared when he came in con-

tact with a master of the science. He had spent hours in attempting to discover the meaning of what the books tried to teach him. Mr. Severne set the matter clear in a minute. No wonder that the young farmer stoutly maintained his friend's cause.

"Well," said Farmer Ashow, as they rose from tea, "when Mr. Severne catches the thieves I'll believe in him. And now I'm going to smoke a pipe. Come down to the river with me, Mary."

This was a regular custom of the summer afternoon. A pleasant path beside the Avon bounded the garden, and led towards some beautiful beech coppice. And up and down this the farmer loved to saunter in the sunshine, smoking his long pipe, and listening to Mary's gossip. The scene was enjoyable. The great mill-wheel moved slowly through the water; the lasher sparkled in the sunshine; trout leaped at the fluttering fly; now and then a kingfisher zigzagged from bank to bank, or a tall heron rose slowly in the air; and always stately swans floated double, "swan and shadow," upon the poetic stream.

I think this was the choicest time of Farmer Ashow's summer days. In winter he liked the late evening, the settle and the great wood fire, and Mary's bird-like voice singing for him her favorite old ballads. But in summer he loved the Avon march, and to loiter with his daughter along the leafy path where years before he had wooed his wife.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A BOUDOIR POUR BOUDER.

"An oriel window looks  
O'er elms alive with rooks,  
While afar,  
Past glades where browse the deer,  
There shines a silver mere,  
Like a star."

At eleven on the morning after Vivian's night ride, he lounged down to breakfast at Broadoak, dressed point-device, and looking as fresh as paint. The Squire had breakfasted long before, and was out looking after his affairs. Lady Eva, however, had but just arrived, being like the lady (was it Millamant?) in Congreve's play, who loved *sommeils de matin*.

"Well, child," said Vivian, giving Eva a cousinly kiss on the forehead, "how are you this morning? I, to say the truth, am thirsty. With your august permission, I'll tell Laurence to produce some hock and seltzer.

'A pleasure worthy Xerxes, the great king.'

Every well-educated young lady knows of the passage."

The butler served the effervescent liquid, and Vivian felt refreshed.

"Now for breakfast. Why, Eva, you look

as fresh this morning as an Asian myrtle which the Hamadryads have watered. Who would think you were an old married woman?"

"Don't be tiresome, Val. Have some breakfast."

"That will I. Pshaw! a heap of letters. Duns, *Cugina*, as sure as fate! Since the Reform Bill, English tradesmen have become a perfect nuisance."

Vivian did not open his letters, but proceeded to eat his breakfast, showing an excellent good appetite. When he had finished, he carelessly thrust his correspondence into his coat-pocket, lighted a cigarette, and said to his cousin:

"Now, little girl, let us go and have a stroll."

Wide windows opened to a terrace. Lady Eva took from a couch a broad-leaved straw hat, and they passed into the bright summer air. Full of perfume was the air, from myriads of fragrant flowers that made islands of color in the emerald lawns; full also of music from the unwearied throats of multitudinous birds that haunted the full-foliaged trees.

"You ought to have a son and heir to enjoy this jolly place, Eva," he said, after a few puffs of his cigarette. "It's entailed, of course?"

"I suppose so," she replied; "but I don't care. Rupert is very happy, and so am I."

"Rupert would like a boy, depend on it. I dare say the old place will have to go to some vile cad whom he despises. Well, it can't be helped. You'll be a charming widow, without encumbrances, and with plenty of money."

"You are in a wicked mood this morning, Valentine. I am tired of you. Good-bye."

Therewith she ran off along the terrace, and disappeared into the house.

"Poor little Eva!" he soliloquized, "she'd give her ears for a boy. I suppose I may as well look at these confounded letters."

He sat on a stone seat on the terrace, and looked through these documents. From tradesmen, several; from the *demimonde* one or two; from a London friend, some social gossip; and one brief anonymous scrawl with the Riverdale postmark:

"Sir,  
"You are known. Be careful."

"A Well-wisher."

"Queer—very," said Vivian to himself. "I must think about this."

Meanwhile, Lady Eva had reached her boudoir, locked the door, and thrown herself into an easy fauteuil. It was a charming room—a perfect nest for so pretty a bird. When Squire Redfern prepared to bring home his beautiful bride, for whom he had that strong steadfast love unfelt save by men of ripe age, he lavished upon her all that his wealth could procure. That boudoir must have cost a fabulous sum of money. It was filled with reminiscences of

"The glory that was Greece,  
And the grandeur that was Rome."

The Squire, having a fine taste and an inexhaustible purse, made the great house of Broad-

oak Avon look young again when Lady Eva came home; but he concentrated all his energies on this unique boudoir, and the result was perfection. The room had been added to the house by himself, in his bachelor days, with the idea that he would use it as a sanctum; but the Squire's life became so active that he found no need for it, and it remained without an occupant. It was an octagon, approached by a corridor, and connected with the house at such an angle that two of its four windows commanded the long terraces of the two principal fronts, while the other two had exquisite views of their own. One of these looked through a wondrous sylvan vista to the river Avon, beyond which rose a steep hill, crowned with a picturesque clump of pine, elm, ash, and birch. Beneath the other lay long slopes of lawn, park-land populous with deer beyond, and a wide reach of the river, which looked in the distance like a lake.

The beauty of the scenery without was well matched by the internal decorations. Three superb frescoes by three of our most famous painters occupied the spaces between those windows. The Squire, a lover of the classics, had chosen for himself the subjects. Whoso was fortunate enough to enter this chamber beheld right opposite him the palace of Menelaus, blazing with torchlight, while a misty moon rose above Eurotas, and queenly Helen passed stealthily through a postern gate to where Paris waited beside a chariot with chafing steeds. What a night it was! Upon Eurotas lay the moonlight, and music whispered from the wind-swept reeds on the river-bank; while flushed Atreides sat late at the banquet in his lighted halls, and drank deep healths to Priam and his sons.

And on the left was Dionysius, as depicted in the Homeric hymn—

"Bacchus, son of Semele,  
Sat on a cliff by the wide wild sea;  
He was yet a merry boy,  
Gazing over the deep with joy—  
Dark his tresses, dark his eyes,  
His chlamys azure as the skies."

The rosy young god lay lazily upon the long lush grass, and lustrous ivy and soft tendrils of the vine sprang by his indolent hand and languid foot, and strove to grow into a wreath about his dusky tresses. But on the beach below a swift shallop had run up, and evil-visaged Tyrrhene pirates clomb carefully towards the summit of the cliff, concealing themselves beneath the heavy fringes of purple-starred clematis. Little did they guess the coming terror in central abysses of the sea.

And on the right was slender-ankled Persephoneia, playing in the wide meadow with the deep-bosomed Oceanides, plucking the myriad blooms of rose and crocus, violet, gladiolus, hyacinth, narcissus, miraculously produced to ensnare her. They burst beneath her fairy feet; they rose to meet her eager hands; the fragrance filled the concave ether. Then suddenly there was a chasm in the wide Nysian fields, and forth sprang Aidoneus in his golden chariot drawn by im-

mortal steeds, and the sky darkened at his stern aspect as if there were a thunder-storm, and the divine daughter of Demeter was rapt from the sight of her terror-stricken companions. The painter had caught that very moment: there was the wide, soft emerald meadow, half in the sunlight of noon, half in baleful eclipse; the daughters of Oceanus, pale and amazed, dropped their flowers upon the turf, and slender-waisted Persephoneia, powerless in her captor's mighty arm, looked with dilating eyes towards the dark steep subterranean road which the coal-black horses panted to descend. An icy wind from that mysterious road seemed to drive back her long dishevelled tresses. Far in the unfathomable depth shone like a star the palace of the god.

But of all the other exquisite adornment of Lady Eva's boudoir it were impossible to speak. The young lady herself, at the moment when we have followed her thither, had no eye for the dainty trifles which on all sides surrounded her. She was simply bored, and angry with herself for being bored. The case was simple. When she married Rupert Redfern, she supposed that she loved him, and expected to be quite happy with him. Amid all her flirtations, she had been untouched herself; the blood ran calmly in her veins, though her beauty and grace were causing the ruddy fluid to rush like a mountain-torrent through other channels; and finding in Squire Redfern a man evidently superior to his rivals in every thing manly, and possessing moreover a great estate, she married him without hesitation. But he was no Romeo, and certainly she was no Juliet.

When the Squire took her down into the country, she fully expected to be happy enough. She liked rural occupation; and, though not given to the distribution of tracts, was fond of looking after the welfare of the poor. What she did not anticipate was her husband's absorption in his own pursuits; he was his own steward, was an active magistrate, was Chairman of Quarter Sessions, looked after county business, parish business, his own business, and was at the same time carefully attentive to all political movements. Once he had been member for the county, and his wife heartily wished he was so still—for at any rate there would be the season in London.

Few women have the gift of making themselves happy independently. How far this is natural to the sex, and how far it is derived from education, it is impossible to say. Enthusiastic advocates of female rights maintain that men have made women what they are; that if they should ever get a fair chance they would be at least equal to men. Lady Eva had, however, no desire for such equality; what she preferred was the superiority which she actually possessed, the irresistible power of fascination.

Τί οὖν διδῶσι; κάλλος.

Eva was formed to be the centre of a pleasant social circle; and when, in the autumn,

Broad oak Avon was full of visitors, she thoroughly enjoyed herself, and caused the enjoyment of others. Her presence seemed to have a magical influence.

But when the great house was left to herself and her husband, Lady Eva was intensely bored. Her cousin's company rather annoyed her than otherwise, though she was really fond of him; for he would treat her with a careless familiarity, as if she were still the mere hoyden that she had been when they were first thrown together. Now this, to a lady who had plenty of natural dignity, was really too bad. And Eva perplexed herself a good deal in attempting to conjecture why Vivian persisted in it. She could not guess.

I am disposed to think that he did it—half unconsciously perhaps—in self-defense. Lady Eva was a very attractive woman, and Vivian a man easy to attract. Indeed if his poems from Italy represented any thing at all like real experience, he must have surpassed all other erotic versifiers in the number of his *amours*. Doubtless there was exaggeration; at the same time, I fancy Vivian *was* somewhat addicted to running after every fresh face and figure that he met in his wandering. There are poets who differ from Pope, opining that the proper study of mankind is women—and of these was Vivian.

Now I take it that he was afraid of liking Eva too well, and so conjured up (*more poetico*, in his mind's eye) the romping child whom he had chased through the woods, and helped to climb trees, and brought home after many a long country ramble, with flushed face and tired feet and torn frock. This is my solution of the problem, but I do not think it occurred to Lady Eva. Would she have felt flattered if it had?

As I have said, she was angry with herself for feeling bored. It was wrong, no doubt. And it was stupid. Mr. Disraeli remarks that no person can be bored who is not a bore. Lord Stanley is of opinion that any one who likes can be happy, since happiness consists in hard work. Lady Eva, without consulting these great authorities, could perceive that in her position, with unlimited command of money, with ample resources of all kinds, it was neither morally nor intellectually to her credit that she was the victim of *ennui*. *Ennui* was unintelligible to Squire Redfern. Nothing and nobody bored him. He would welcome a bitter morning of east wind and sleet and slush just as readily as a divine sunrise that glorified the world, and filled the hearts of lark and thrush with maddening desire of song. Old Mr. Bluebook, editor of a Scottish Review, and the finest master of prose in the English language, seemed to gratify the Squire just as much by his conversation as the choicest wit or most profound thinker of the day. It is a fortunate thing, no doubt, to be gifted with this sort of endurance. Still, I hold that he who does not hate the east wind can not know how sweet is the breath of the South—and that the man who can tolerate

a Scottish statistician or metaphysician must be quite unable to enjoy colloquy with an English poet.

"Valentine is very annoying," soliloquized Lady Eva. "I wish he would go away. And yet this place would be insufferably dull without him. What a foolish creature I am! Why can't I contrive to be happy? There are millions of people leading happy lives who ought to be perfectly miserable if they did their duty; while I, who have got every thing I want in the world, am tired of the monotonous way in which my life goes on. Breakfast—a stroll—luncheon—a ride or drive—dinner—music and chat—bed. This is the way I pass the time with utter regularity. It is as bad as the treadmill. I wish something would happen. I suppose it is wicked, but I could almost wish those robbers they talk about would break into the house, and give me some excitement."

In this foolish fashion Eva meditated, lounging in the easiest of chairs, and looking out upon the sunlit terraces and gardens and glades. Had her namesake in Eden any such feeling of discontent before she tasted the mystic fruit? Did she find the glory of the grass, the freshness of the effluent air that played amid the mighty cedar branches, the music of morn and the silence of night, a trifle too monotonous? Did she pine to know what change might be if one passed the legionary angels and the belt of forest beyond, and reached the outer world? Lady Eva, at any rate, in an Eden of her own, felt terribly, ineffably weary. There were times when she would willingly have changed places with any poor peasants whom she saw at work.

However, being well aware that she was in a morbid state, she resolved to make an effort against it. She rang the bell, and announced her intention to ride. Her bright bay Arab mare, Ianthe, was brought round, and she started to the other side of the Avon, where the hills rose steep and somewhat wild, and their sides were clothed with beech and fir. There was a point at the summit, near a keeper's lodge, whence there was a view across the plain to Riverdale, which lay far down the Avon.

In this direction Lady Eva rode, trying to clear the cobwebs from her brain. It was a private road all the way. She crossed the Avon at the Mill Farm, and received a low courtesy from Mary Ashow. She was too pre-occupied to speak to the little girl, and rode on in her reverie, marvelling whether Mary was happier than herself. A winding way led to the lodge, at whose garden-gate stood the keeper's wife, with a young child in her arms. She was Irish, this young woman, and her name was Eileen Maher. Her husband, Valentine Maher, an athletic Irishman whom the Squire had picked up in Galway, was a great favorite with his master. The baby in Eileen's arms was her second child: the first died of some infantile ailment, leaving its mother in so terrible a state of grief that it verged on madness.

Lady Eva dismounted and gave her horse

to the groom, and began to talk to Eileen. The baby, a hairless sturdy young mortal, with those eyes of miraculous blue that new-born children bring fresh from heaven, was stretching and laughing.

"Let me hold him, Eileen," said Lady Eva.

"Shure, your ladyship, he'll be a throuble to ye."

But Lady Eva took him in her arms, and, as he looked at her with the portentous gravity of babyhood, felt a thrill through every nerve. This child had taught her what it was she pined for. Here was a young life, fresh from God's hand, given to Eileen—such happiness was denied to her.

"Why am I childless?" she asked, bitterly, with big tears in her lustrous brown eyes.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A LESSON.

"L'Amour tenait école."

AT this moment I perceive that a course of lectures to ladies on Size and Shape, as an introduction to Geometry, will be delivered, by permission of the Lord President of the Council on Education, in the lecture-room of the South Kensington Museum, by a gentleman who writes B.A. after his name, and is a fellow of Trin. Coll. Cam.

Size and Shape! An introduction to *geometry*! Well, 'tis a mad world!

There is a fellow of Trin. Coll. Cam.,  
And though odd it appear, yet sure I am  
That from Colney Hatch he did escape,  
Lecturing ladies on Size and Shape.

How will our Bachelor deal with Size?  
Will he measure pupils? or even eyes?  
I suppose his course would end with haste  
If he tried with his arm a student's waist.

And the marvel of Shape—the sensuous swerve,  
Delicate dimple, maddening curve—  
Egad! they are things past Euclid's reach. . . .  
Let him go to school where he dares to teach.

The modern method is that a Bachelor of Arts shall stand up and lecture a crowd of ladies. Still, I expect there are a good many couples who adhere to the old method of Abélard and Heloise. Any way, John Grainger, who knew nothing about the ancient authorities in his favor of his own notion, connected tuition with love-making. He was a great student, as I have said, of three sciences—mathematics, chemistry, botany. As may be supposed, his knowledge of them was about commensurate with that which Donna Inez had of Greek. His mathematics were not altogether spurious; good luck had put him in the way of a Peacock's *Algebra*, the *Ivanhoe* of Cambridge, which had taught him that letters and figures may convey ideas. Moreover, he had made the acquaintance of a British schoolmaster named Kirby, a marvellously clever little fellow of the old school, who thought

geometry the only thing worth learning, and could inscribe a regular polygon of seventeen sides in a circle. His botany and chemistry were more empirical. The former was adulterated with poetry, and the latter with experiment. Both sciences, thus mollified and mitigated, are very nice for lady pupils. They like to connect the rose with Waller, and the lesser celandine with Wordsworth. They like the minor classics of stamens and pistils, tetrandria and monogynia. They also like to see potassium catch fire on ice, or chlorate of potash and phosphorus produce subaqueous combustion when touched by nitric acid. The great ideas which underlie both these sciences do not reach them—they like the fun and flirtation. When Cole, C.B., invented South Kensington, he was the feminine Londoner's greatest benefactor. There is no finer flirting-ground in the metropolis than the Department of Science and Art. And, as flirtation is both a science and an art, surely the department is most appropriately named.

John Grainger had taken holiday this summer afternoon, to give Mary Ashow a lesson in botany. The pretty little lass, in straw hat and light print dress, carrying a basket to contain her floral treasures, tripped gayly along the wood-paths; while her big companion stalked steadily beside her. Very pleasant and cool were the woods, with just a faint breath from the south-west rippling all their leaves and fluttering the flowers that grew about the roots of the trees. They ascended to a terrace, high above the river, which was only visible at intervals through the dense summer foliage. The brown beech leaves of the last autumn still carpeted the woods; but a multitude of many-colored mosses mixed with them; and at the tree-roots big fungi grew in forms and hues indescribable.

About these last John Grainger was very learned. They were good to eat, he assured his pretty pupil; they had the nitrogenous elements of meat in them; some of them tasted like veal outlets, and others like beef steaks. Mary listened with grave attention, but expressed an opinion that she would much rather not try them.

But the great attraction of this particular wood was that it contained some of the rarest orchises. You know the flowers—pretty freaks of nature in a whimsical mood, blossoms that look like insects resting a moment on a leaf. In search of these Mary's bright eyes wandered restlessly in all directions, and at last she suddenly exclaimed—

"Oh! John, there's a spider orchis, I believe."

"*Ophrys arachites*," said the young man learnedly—"a gynandrous plant."

"Never mind," interrupted Mary, petulantly. "But you *must* get me that one. It is such a beauty!"

Now this tall flower, bearing half a dozen blooms, which looked like so many spiders in good condition, grew some little way down over

the brow of the steep slope. It was just beyond John Grainger's reach. Active as a deer, he let himself down by a bough of ground-ash, dug up the orchis with his pocket-knife, and threw it up to Miss Ashow. But then he found the chalky ground giving way under him, and the ash-root gradually loosening, so that he could not possibly regain the path, but must slide down and make his way round. Telling Mary to meet him at the Cavern, he let go his hold, and by jumping and sliding reached the bottom of the slope. So they went along in parallel paths, Mary in the wood, and John Grainger on the river-bank, catching glimpses of each other at intervals.

The Cavern was a curious excavation in the rock, which tradition asserted to be an ancient haunt of robbers. It would only have held three or four robbers of any thing like a reasonable size. Loopholes were cut in it, through which there were beautiful views up and down the Avon, and a seat was hewn in the solid rock. Evidently it was an ancient cutting; why hewn there it would be hard to say. Perhaps a hermit might have lived there in the old ascetic days; there would have been no room for him to lie down, unless he were a very short anchorite indeed; but he might have been of a sect that preferred to sleep standing. But the origin of the cave matters little. It was a good place to make the terminus of a walk. On a hot day the stone chamber was always cool, and there were pleasant prospects through its narrow apertures; and the seat was so small, that two young folks like John Grainger and Mary Ashow, sitting down in it together, were in deliciously close juxtaposition.

However, on this occasion Mary approached it alone, and, as she approached, she noticed the fragrance of a cigar. Instead of alarming her, as might have been supposed, it seemed to hasten her steps. She tripped down the narrow path, orchis in hand, which led to the cave, and was greeted on entering by no less a personage than Mr. Valentine Vivian, who was smoking a cigar, and admiring the scenery with a somewhat patronizing air. "Ah! Mistress Mary," he said, when he saw her, "what good fairy told you to come here to-day?"

And therewith he unhesitatingly kissed her pretty lips, to which she made no resistance. If poor simple John Grainger, far below by the river, had seen that osculation, how shocked he would have been! Often had he dreamed of those tempting lips, but never had he ventured to approach them.

"Oh, Mr. Vivian," she said, "who would have thought of meeting you here? I came out with poor John Grainger, but he slipped down the bank in getting me this beautiful orchis."

"An orchis!" said Vivian. "I accept the omen. And poor John is at the bottom of the hill, I suppose. Yes, I see him just turning up the zigzag."

Having reconnoitred John Grainger, Vivian



proceeded to make love to Mary in an easy off-hand way. The poor child, a farmer's daughter of eighteen, took his insolence for the gentlemanly style of doing things. I need not say that this was very far from being their first *rencontre*. Vivian had marked down the rustic beauty very soon after his arrival at Broadoak Avon. He was a student of character; he found out the old farmer at an early date, and made a complete conquest of him. Indeed Farmer Ashow, who was absolutely loyal to the Squire, of course believed in all the Squire's guests. But John Grainger hated Valentine—partly from a simple honest instinct, which taught him that there was something insincere about this superfine gentleman—partly, also, from the fact that Valentine treated him with superb indifference, scarcely appearing to notice his existence.

At this moment Vivian turned his attention to his love-making with considerable energy. John Grainger would be here in a few minutes, so he made the most of the time. But, somehow, he did not take count of the time. John climbed the slope more rapidly than he expected; and, on approaching the cavern, he also smelt the fragrant tobacco. He came forward quietly. Yes, there were voices, and Mary's one of them.

Should he listen? He knew it was wrong? The blood tingled right up to the tips of his great ears as he thought of it. Yet who could be with Mary in that solitary place? When people doubt, they usually do the wrong thing.

John Grainger listened, and the result verified the old adage.

"So you don't care much about that oaf," said Vivian.

"Why, he is a mere boy, and a very stupid boy," said Mary. "How should I care for him? Poor John!"

"He is awfully fond of you," said Vivian. "You treat him very badly. I suppose he would break his neck to get you a flower."

All this and more John Grainger heard. What should he do? He felt inclined to take the impudent fellow by the throat, and hurl him down the slope into the river. But he was withheld from this outrage by two considerations—one that Vivian was much weaker than himself, the other that a brawl in Mary's presence was not to be thought of. He could not decide what he ought to do; so at last he fairly took flight, made his way up through the woods in a different direction from that which he had traversed with Mary, and, putting on the steam, tried to walk off his annoyance. Walking or riding rapidly, the brain works. Who was the great orator that always made his speeches while riding across country? Your thoroughbred devours the ground—with like rapidity shall your eloquence destroy opposition. You fly over a big fence like a bird—similarly shall you pass over the head of your adversary.

John Grainger, doing nearly six miles an hour, soon walked off his first confusion and perplexity of feeling. Out of the wood, and on

the open moorland, his mental atmosphere seemed to clear. He was an immature boy, you know, and his first feelings were any thing but intelligible to himself. Now, he began to think consecutively. Did he love Mary Ashow? Not any longer, he thought. But he pitied her—and he despised Vivian. These two notions were quite clear to him. Mary was in the clutches of a scoundrel, and he would rescue her, if rescue was possible.

Such was the decision into which John Grainger walked himself.

Meanwhile Vivian, after lighting another cigar, walked out into the wood. He could see nothing of Grainger.

"Your lumpish adorer has vanished, Mary," he said. "I should have thought he was too big and heavy for that sort of business. Never mind; you and I will walk home together."

"What can have become of him?" said Mary. "I never knew him do any thing of this kind before."

"He certainly doesn't look the sort of fellow to be eccentric. Never mind, my darling, it is all the better for you and me. We can stroll back leisurely. I did not expect to have so pleasant an afternoon."

Leisurely indeed was their stroll towards the Mill Farm. It was long past the hour of tea-drinking when they arrived—Mary with a sweet flushed face, Vivian looking as cool as Mephistopheles. But, as it happened, the hour did not matter, for Farmer Ashow had been called away to Riverdale on business, and had left word that he might not be home till late.

"Then you can give me a cup of tea, Mary, with some of that divine cream," said Vivian. "I think such tea as you make is more refreshing than iced Champagne."

So they had tea together; and after that they strolled about the place, and Mary Ashow showed Mr. Vivian some of the quaint nooks and angles in the old farm-house and mill.

"There are such lots of curious closets in the old house," she said. "Father doesn't think he knows them all. There's a big closet, with a door in his room, and another door in mine, where I tell him he keeps all his money. He never lets any body see the inside of it."

"I must see your room, Mistress Mary," said Valentine. "Just one peep through the door, you know."

After some few feints, she consented; and Vivian had a glimpse of the little girl's chamber, old-fashioned and not elegant, but exquisitely clean and fragrant. And she showed him the big door of black oak which led to her father's mysterious closet.

Vivian walked home slowly, there being plenty of time to smoke and reflect before the first dinner-gong sounded. On his way he again encountered the sailor of the previous day. Not now dressed as a sailor—he wore a black suit and a white necktie and spectacles, and looked very much like a Dissenting minister. He brought Vivian some letters.

"Very good," said Vivian, after glancing at them. "There is no important alteration, Mark, except that I intend to be there myself."

"I am glad of that, sir," he said; and was gone.

Mary Ashow, left to herself, went to her room and looked in her mirror, and questioned herself to know whether she was pretty enough for Mr. Vivian. Then she came down to wait for her father and John Grainger. John arrived first, but not till eight o'clock; and then went off to bed, telling one of the servants to say he was not very well. Farmer Ashow got home about ten.

"I'm dog-tired, Mary," he said. "And I'm very cross and very hungry. Give me a kiss to cure my crossness, and then see if you can find any supper."

## CHAPTER V.

### A NIGHT ATTACK.

"Here laws are all inviolate."

EVERY BODY remembers how Don Juan's sagacious reflections on the beatitude of this island were suddenly interrupted. If there were always a convenient footpad to stop people when they begin to utter sagacious reflections, by putting a pistol to the reflector's ear, it would be a considerable blessing. And, oh what a treat would it be if there were somebody to jerk a novel-writer's elbow when his invention fails him, and his pen goes off into prosy "padding," and bring him back to his legitimate work! Well, let me go back to mine.

Farmer Ashow had his supper, and smoked his pipe, and went to bed, where he soon slept soundly. His was a huge old-fashioned room, with several closets, all carefully locked; and his last business, before saying his prayers, which (being churchwarden) he did with great regularity, was to ascertain that things were safe in these receptacles. Then he put his big bunch of keys under his pillow, and slumbered in full confidence. Was there not his ancient blunderbuss over his bed's head, and would not the old watch-dog in the yard give him ample warning? Certainly the blunderbuss had not been fired off for many a year; and Rover, a very fine mastiff in his time, had lost most of his teeth, and nearly forgotten how to bark; but these considerations did not occur to Farmer Ashow.

Mistress Mary, who slept in the next room to her father, did not compose herself very comfortably to rest this night. She was a good deal fluttered by the events of the afternoon. She had met Mr. Vivian before, and he had treated her with condescending familiarity; but on this occasion he had quite taken her by storm, and she could not help going over and over again all that he had said to her. His words were very pleasant indeed. She was a very foolish simple little girl, without a thought of wrong, and she looked with immense admira-

tion upon this very fine gentleman, and unhesitatingly believed every word that he said. Honest John Grainger, huge and hideous, seemed an inferior animal in comparison with Mr. Vivian, who was all elegance and grace, yet seemed full of fire and spirit.

Though under the middle size, there was nothing unmanly about Vivian; and when you saw him on horseback, the most daring rider in the county, you recognized the fact that size is, after all, a secondary consideration.

The more Mary thought of him, lying sleepless, yet not unhappy, through the midnight hours, the more she loved him. He was like a hero of romance to her. She had never seen any body like him, and made up her mind that he could not possibly have an equal among mortals.

John Grainger did not get any sleep at all. He was fiercely indignant. He thought Vivian an effeminate fop, and Mary a heartless little fool. He strode up and down his chamber in a towering rage. His room was on an upper floor, down a long corridor, so that the rest of the household were not liable to be disturbed by his chemical explosions and emissions of odor. He exploded this night more furiously and continuously than any of his gases.

It was about two o'clock, and John Grainger was still striding up and down, and Mary Ashow was just sinking into the pleasant visionary doze which precedes sound sleep, when there was a movement in Farmer Ashow's dark chamber. A man emerged cautiously from his concealment beneath the bed, and crept towards the pillow. The old gentleman was very fast asleep; his journey, and a good supper, and some hot spirits and water, had sent him to bed in a somnolent state. It was an easy business to take the keys from the pillow without waking him. The thief, a slight man, wearing a black mask and carrying a dark lantern, secured the keys, opened the chamber door, locked it behind him, and then went quietly down stairs. Next he unfastened the house door, and, standing on the threshold, gave a low whistle. In a moment he was joined by several other men, all masked like himself. The great yard-dog did not bark all this time, and the house lay at the mercy of the robbers.

There was a whispered consultation. Then the scoundrels stole silently up stairs. Farmer Ashow's room was entered, and the old gentleman skillfully bound and gagged before he was half awake. Every closet in its turn was investigated, but nothing of much value found, except in that which has already been described as having a door which communicated with Mary's room. Herein was an iron safe, the key of which the burglars could not find; so, after a cursory examination, they decided to take the safe with all its contents, and a couple of them carried it away down stairs.

There were then three men left behind, one of them the fellow who had been concealed in the house. They talked in whispers.

"Will he come?" asked one of them.

"He said he would."

"What about the girl? Shall we venture it?"

"If he comes there'll be an awful row. But let us try it. He can't help it when it's over."

They were discussing the fate of poor little Mary Ashow. In another moment she was startled from her sleep, and saw three masked ruffians at her bedside. She gave a shrill shriek, and fainted. Nothing more did she remember, until the fresh air revived her, and she found herself travelling rapidly over the moor in some sort of open vehicle. In her terror she swooned again; and when she next regained consciousness, she was lying in a very comfortable bedroom, and a kind-looking old woman sat by her bedside.

But we must return to the Farm. Mary's shrill shriek had been heard. John Grainger heard it, and came rushing and tumbling down stairs, and found the house-door wide open, and heard wheels retreating in the distance. In his haste, he had brought no light, though his candle was burning. Another who heard it was Valentine Vivian, who, we know, was in the habit of riding late at night. He spurred his mare, and reached the farm just as John Grainger, having found a candle, again reached the front door. Vivian, who was smoking, as usual, sprang from his horse, and said—

"What is the matter, Grainger?"

"I don't understand it," said John, who was not frightened, but completely bewildered. "There have been robbers here."

"But I heard a scream," said Vivian. "Is Miss Mary safe?"

"I don't know," said John.

Calling him a confounded fool, Vivian made his way up stairs. Mary's room-door was open, and the pretty bird was gone from her nest. Then he passed into Farmer Ashow's room, and cut the ropes which bound that unlucky old gentleman. By this time the whole household was aroused, and every body was talking at once.

"Look here," said Vivian, "you are all wasting time. Grainger, send a fellow on horseback to the county police-station, and ride yourself into Riverdale, to Mr. Severne. You know him, don't you?"

"Yes," replied Grainger, still rather devoid of presence of mind.

"Rouse yourself, my good fellow," said Vivian. "If you don't care for the old gentleman's money, you do for your pretty sweetheart, I suppose. Think of her in the hands of those ruffians."

This last speech cut Grainger like the lash of a whip, and drove away his stupid bewilderment. He obeyed orders at once. The messenger to the county police had not far to go, and some of those officials were soon upon the spot. John Grainger, however, had a long ride to Riverdale.

Let us follow him. He mounted the best horse in the farmer's stables; but John was a

heavy weight even now, and the animal in question, though capable of travelling any distance, could not travel any distance rapidly. Hence was it that it was past daybreak when he reached the head-quarters of the Riverdale police. The active Chief Constable had just arrived. John Grainger, in as few words as possible, acquainted him with what had happened.

"The county police were sent for, of course," said Severne.

"Yes, at once."

"Well, they will do their best, no doubt—but I fear that will be very little. The young lady and the big chest are somewhere in Riverdale, without a question."

"It seems strange," said John Grainger, "that a young lady can be carried away and concealed in such times as these. Surely you ought to be able to find her in a few hours, if she is in Riverdale."

"I'll try. This gang of scoundrels has been wonderfully lucky; but I mean to have them at last."

"There is no time to be lost now," said John, whose big frame was tremulous with anxiety. "You must rescue Miss Ashow."

"Take good heart, my boy. Go and get some breakfast after your ride; then you'll be fit to help us if we want you."

"Very well," said John. "I shall wait at the Maypole till I hear from you."

Severne was naturally in a highly irritated condition of mind. Ordinary county robberies were no business of his; but in the present instance it was clear that the burglars and highwaymen who had startled the county with their depredations were quartered in Riverdale. They had been at work for weeks, and yet he had not traced them. It was a frightful nuisance to a man with whom baffling thieves was a passion.

Now he set all his detective machinery at work. Plenty of suspected persons and places there were in the great town of Riverdale, and these had all been carefully watched since the depredations commenced; but there had been nothing to connect them with the outrages which had alarmed the county. Clearly this was a new movement, an independent organization. Severne, with all his Cambridge acumen, was thoroughly perplexed.

Leaving the Chief Constable to do his utmost, and John Grainger to breakfast with what appetite he may at the Maypole, let us return to Broadoak Avon. Vivian, having liberated Farmer Ashow, and seen the county police in possession of the premises, rode quietly home, soliloquizing as he rode.

"Confound these fellows!" he said to himself. "I shall have to come down upon them pretty sharp. What's the best thing to do? The Squire will want to go to Riverdale. I'll go with him."

Squire Redfern was an early riser. Soon after five he was out on the lawn, and was surprised to see Vivian there already.

"Why, Valentine," he said, "what's the meaning of this?"

"Another robbery to-night, Redfern. I was taking one of my nocturnal rides, and heard a terrific shriek, and found they had broken into the Mill Farm, and carried off Ashow's money and his daughter."

"His daughter!" said the Squire in amazement. "Are you serious?"

"True, upon my life. It was her scream I heard. When I got down I found old Ashow tied and gagged, and that stupid fellow Grainger mooning about without the least idea of what to do. I sent for the county police, and made Grainger ride off to Severne, at Riverdale."

"It's a most extraordinary and audacious thing," said the Squire. "I shall go over to Riverdale at once. Will you come?"

"You had better see Eva first, and ascertain if she would like to come also. A robbery so close will frighten her, perhaps. Meanwhile, suppose we go down to the farm."

They found Mr. Ashow in a fierce state of indignation. He had never been known to swear with such fine fluency and fervor. He abused every body, but especially the police; there was a big puffy pulpy superintendent in charge, and on him Mr. Ashow's wrath descended most fiercely.

"Feed up the police as if they were prize oxen, like that fellow Iremonger," said the enraged farmer, "and, of course, they're too big and too stupid to do their duty. They do nothing but eat and drink at the expense of the rates. We shall be obliged to become our own police. If I'd been keeping watch last night, some of those fellows would have found out their mistake."

"I'm going to drive over to Riverdale this morning," said the Squire. "Will you come with us, Ashow? We shall be very likely to hear something of your daughter there. Come up to Broadoak and have some breakfast, and by that time the carriage will be ready."

The farmer assented. On their return they found Lady Eva, whose lady's maid had brought her the news in an exaggerated form, ready to breakfast with them. The Squire, who was a famous whip, ordered out his favorite four-in-hand team, and off they started for the town, Eva on the box by her husband, and Vivian and the farmer behind them.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SILVERSMITH'S SHOP.

"Bos, fur."

*Eton Latin Grammar.*

'Tis odd how gentlemen of the Hebrew race, though Mr. Disraeli attempts to teach them that they ought to be proud of their origin, are in the habit of disguising the grand old names which belong to them. Surely Abraham is bet-

ter than Braham, and Moses more euphonious than Moss. But the name of the great lawgiver, having been shortened to Moss by a nasal process, is often further corrupted to Boss. This was the name over the largest silversmith's shop in Riverdale.

Boss was a garrulous little Jew of about forty, who cringed to his customers in the most abject way, and who sold his plate and jewelry at the highest obtainable prices. Of course he was prosperous. All the leading people of the county patronized him. Harry Mauleverer had taken to yachting, and all his race-cups were to be seen in Boss's window. His establishment stood in the Rope Walk, on the best side of the great open market-place of Riverdale.

To this shop came Vivian, soon after the party from Broadoak had arrived in the town. Mr. Boss was behind his counter.

"I want to speak to yon, Boss," he said, and went with the jeweller into his private parlor. "You know what these scoundrels did last night?" said Vivian.

"They broke into a house, I hear. They have brought away a big safe, which they don't know how to open," he said, with a grin.

"They have done worse than that. They have brought away a little girl with them, a farmer's daughter, about eighteen years old."

"The devil! What fools!"

"Yes, it is that big ruffian, Black Ned. He begins to think he can do just what he likes. I'll teach him a lesson this time."

"Don't do any thing rash, Mr. Vivian," said the Jew.

"Rash!" he repeated, with a contemptuous laugh. "Come along. I suppose they are in their usual haunt."

Vivian and the Jew descended long flights of stone steps, till they came to an arched cellar cut in the sandy rock, and lighted throughout with gas. Riverdale is built on a sandy foundation, and abounds in such cavernous excavations. This was a wine-cellar, well stocked with both casks and bottles. By-and-by they came to an iron gate, which being unlocked, they passed into a second cellar. In one compartment of this a room was fitted up, and here they found a dozen fellows, some asleep, some smoking and drinking. Farmer Ashow's impracticable safe was in one corner of the room: tough as its owner, it had resisted a whole heap of iron implements, which lay broken beside it.

"Now, Mark," said Vivian, sharply, addressing the man whom he had met in the Broadoak woods, "what is the meaning of this? Why do you let that big blockhead Barnett make such a fool of you?"

The said Barnett, otherwise Black Ned, lay forward with his head on the table, having evidently been drinking hard.

"I can't manage him, your honor. He is always leading the other men into danger."

"I'll manage him. Is the girl safe?"

"She is in bed up stairs, with old Mother Wiley in charge of her."

"You took her away with scarcely any clothes, I know. Go at once and tell the old woman to find some sort of clothing that is fit for her, and then take her out when the street is quiet, and leave her in the market-place. The little girl does not know much of Riverdale, so she can easily manage so that she won't know where she is. See that done immediately, then come back here to me."

Mark went. Vivian sat down and lighted a cigar. Such of the men who were awake eyed him very much as wild beasts eye their keeper.

Presently Mark returned.

"Is it done?"

"Yes, your honor. The old woman slipped round the corner, and saw the girl talking to a policeman."

"Good. You have been to blame in this affair, Mark; but the real fault is with Barnett. Wake him up, some of you."

A couple of fellows shook him, and he stared stupidly at Vivian.

"Listen to me, my men. You all ought to know me by this time. I'm just as determined here as I was at sea. Perhaps you remember what came of Jack Randal. Now, if I didn't know Barnett to be only a fool, I'd shoot him at once, and you might dig his grave in the sand; but I'll give him one more chance. Mark, get the cat, and strap him down—he shall have three dozen."

Barnett, still stupefied with drink, did not seem to understand all this; but another fellow sprang up, with a big cudgel in his hand, and swore a frightful oath that nobody should touch Black Ned.

"Indeed," said Vivian. And, with prompt rapidity, he took a revolver from his pocket, and put a shot through the ruffian's right arm. "Now," he said, "look to your own affairs. Tie that blackguard up, Mark."

He was obeyed, and Barnett received three dozen lashes, as skillfully and sternly applied as if Mark had been a boatswain in the old days of fierce flogging.

"That will teach the fellow to leave the girls alone," said Vivian to the Jew, with a laugh. "He has wanted a lesson for some time."

Therewith they left the chamber, and found their way back to the upper air. Vivian came into the shop just as Squire Redfern and Lady Eva stopped at the door.

"Mary Ashow is found, Valentine!" exclaimed Lady Eva.

"But not the safe," said the Squire.

"And Severne is triumphant, of course," remarked Vivian.

"Why, he had nothing to do with it," said the Squire. "The little girl says she remembers scarcely any thing after she was taken away, until she found herself in bed, and an old woman in charge of her. She was very kindly treated, but it was no use to ask any questions. By-and-by the old woman went away for a time; when she returned, she dressed Mary in clothes that did not belong to her, and took her very quickly

down stairs, and through some narrow streets into the market-place. There she left her, and the child saw a policeman, to whom she told her story."

"Can't she show the way to the place she came from?" asked Vivian.

"No—she has tried, but without an approach to success. She was very much bewildered, naturally; and these alleys leading to the market-place are all so very much alike. But Severne, who is awfully annoyed at being so completely foiled, declares he will find the place before sunset."

"Well done, Severne! let us hope he'll succeed. Boss, here, tells me that the people of Riverdale are in a terrible state of panic dismay. They don't venture out at nights. Some of the leading tradesmen have a select club they call the Institution, and they have been actually frightened into giving up their meetings. The town is demoralized."

"The thieves will do some good," said the Squire, "if they make the Riverdale people go to bed at respectable hours. They keep up a great deal too late in general."

"Will Mr. Severne find the safe, I wonder?" said Lady Eva.

"Severne's too clever by half," replied Vivian. "Boss has just been showing me a love of a bracelet, Eva. I'll wager it with you against a box of Redfern's best cigars, that your astute constable doesn't find the safe."

"You may risk that, Eva," said the Squire. "Valentine will be sure to smoke the cigars, whether he wins them or not."

So the bet was made; and soon afterwards the party returned to Broadoak, Mary Ashow, by reason of her rather curious apparel, being an inside passenger. As to the farmer, he was completely incredulous as to there being the remotest possibility of recovering his property.

"It doesn't matter, Squire," said the tough old boy, with a sardonic grin. "They haven't ruined me—I shall be able to pay my rent. But I couldn't have got on without Mary."

## CHAPTER VII.

### ON A GREEK ISLAND.

"Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,  
He was so great a loss to good society."

How Valentine Vivian came, years before this story commenced, upon a small island in the *Ægean* Sea, need not be stated at length. Weary of the beaten tracks of European amusement, he hired at Marseilles a rakish half-decked craft, with a most villainous crew of mixed nationality, and steered straight for the Greek islands. One of the crew, an Englishman, named Mark Walsh, had been, in days gone by, a very reputable fellow, in the employ of English yachtsmen, and from him Vivian learnt that it was the design of the exemplary gentle-

man whose craft he had hired, to take an early opportunity of murdering him and seizing his property.

Vivian was not the man to take this sort of thing calmly, so he planned with Walsh how to checkmate these fellows, and, thanks to his indomitable pluck and superior supply of firearms, the plan succeeded. They had run past Sicily at this time. Vivian fastened a couple of the ringleaders into the bottom of the boat, and held right on to one of the smallest of the Greek islets, north of Crete, where Walsh assured him there was safe anchorage, plenty of food, and no inhabitants. It was quite a gem of an island. On its southern shore was a beautiful land-locked harbor of calm deep water, accessible by one entrance only, and that entrance half-hidden by olives growing to the water's edge, and trailing plants that had grown into an impenetrable fringe over the porphyry cliffs. Stairs cut in the rock led to a natural cavern, which human ingenuity had made perfectly habitable. There were the coolest of chambers, where one might sleep within pleasant sound of the washing waves. Moreover, there was a satisfactory stock of the wine of the country, in a cellar which Dionysius himself might have chosen for coolness and secrecy. This, Vivian learnt from Walsh, had been there for some years, being the remainder stock of some piratical islanders who had fallen victims to the Turks.

Vivian's promptitude and courage had won the respect and admiration of Mark Walsh, who became his absolute slave. It was determined to remain in this quiet retreat for a while; there were plenty of goats on the island, and birds of many kinds, and wine enough to last till there came another vintage—probably much longer. Vivian, having his recollections of the Odyssey, his visions of the days when Ariadne was a vintager, was delighted with his discovery. He called his crew together, and told them his intention, assuring them, in the plainest possible language, that they would have to obey him if they valued their lives. He had the two leading scoundrels—captain and mate, they called themselves—tied up and soundly flogged, which bit of determined discipline struck terror into the rest.

Very luxuriously Vivian passed his time for some weeks, his gun always providing him with capital dinners. Besides, there was an ample supply of fish in the bay—such red mullet as were never seen in the mouth of the Arun were to be caught by hundreds. By-and-by, however, he got to the end of his tobacco, and asked Mark what was to be done.

"Shall I take the cutter, with two or three hands, and see if I can buy some on one of the larger islands?"

"I think that's the best plan," replied Vivian. "And if you meet with any thing fresh in the way of eating or drinking, bring it in, for a change."

Walsh started on his expedition with great

ardor, and was away a couple of days. The cutter did not return alone. With her came a long light boat, with a single lateen sail, such as are frequent in these island-sprinkled seas. Vivian descended to the shore to see what had happened. To his amazement, Walsh proceeded to help ashore a beautiful Greek girl, apparently about fifteen years-old, with no apparel save a single short-sleeved saffron vest reaching just to her knees.

"What the devil does this mean, Mark?" he asked.

"Well, your honor, I suppose you'll blow me up, but I couldn't help it. I tried for tobacco at Santorin and Anaphi, but there was none to be got. Then we overhauled this craft; there were three Greeks on board and this little girl. They didn't want to have any thing to say to us, but I saw there were provisions in the boat, so I boarded them. The cowards jumped into the sea, and swam off as if they were fish. So I considered their boat a fair prize; and I'm glad to say, your honor, there are two or three casks of prime Turkish tobacco, and a lot of other things, which I've not yet examined."

"But how about the girl?" asked Vivian.

"I think they stole her, your honor. Jack Randal talks a little Greek, and that's what he manages to make out. Anyhow, she was delighted to get away from them and come with us."

All this time she had been standing in a perfect attitude, unconscious of her beauty, with a long arched foot, white as the marble beneath it. Her eyes, of a wondrous blue, like that of deep sea-water, were fixed on Vivian's face. Her hair, full of light and lustre, was knotted behind her shapely head, and fastened with a silver arrow. The thin vest of crocus silk revealed every curve of her ripening form. Vivian, perhaps for the first time in his life, was scarcely up to the situation.

"By all the gods of Greece!" he said to himself, "this is a pretty state of affairs! What am I to do with this nymph of the Ægean? Walsh, bring me some of your piratical tobacco and a flask of the yellow wine, and I'll consider the difficult problem."

He stretched himself on a couch of rugs to smoke and think. The young Greek silently seated herself at his feet, and watched him gravely.

Of course the result of his deliberation was that she remained in the island. And, as his followers were thorough ruffians, and as he doubted that even Mark Walsh could scarcely be trusted with a pretty girl, he kept her carefully within his own private dwelling-place. And here be it noticed that, though Vivian was a fast man, and had seen adventure, he was not that scoundrel of the deepest dye who deems every woman a fair object of pursuit. He had a poetic reverence for this waif of the wave—this perfect creature who seemed a gift from Greece to him, inheritor of all the beauty and delight

which rings through musical Greek verse, and sumptuously shines in silent marble. 'Twas of her he wrote :

"Eros a boy! The poets Greek,  
A very pleasant airy clique,  
Might fancy so. We look oblique  
At such a fancy.

'Twas some sweet girl with passionate heart  
First taught the fairy fount to start—  
First practised that delicious art,  
Erotomancy."

Her name, he discovered, was Earine—daughter of spring:

"Nomen cum violis rosisque natum."

Having a marvellous aptitude for languages, he soon recalled from the caverns of memory half-forgotten echoes of his Eton Greek, and contrived to conquer the softened consonants and narrowed vowels of the modern speech. He found that even quantity had changed with time, and that his little friend had heard of Homeros. He learned that *τουφέκι* means a gun, and *πυρόκονις* gunpowder, and *ἀνύπλοιον* a steamer; and reflected that if wary Odysseus had possessed similar knowledge, he would have made a fearful example of the Cyclops, and thought very little indeed of Scylla and Charybdis.

Further, he taught Earine English. She was an apt scholar, and soon made music of our guttural sibilant speech. And a very pleasant companion this child-woman became to him. She would wander with him over the hills when he went on his shooting-expeditions, and lie in the stern of his boat when he made a periphus of the island. To sit upon the brow of a hill forest-crowned, and look down upon that sapphire sea which was the earliest home of poetic beauty, was a complete delight; equally delightful the swift cruise upon its laughing waters, where the free foam far away might well be mistaken for the white forms of swimming nymphs. Vivian was entirely happy, and he and Earine might have lived this lotos-life for a far longer time, but for one incident.

For it happened that on the hottest of summer days they had been wandering over the hills. And upon Vivian came Apollo's anger; when he returned home his brain was stricken with confusion, and he lay down in a dark inner chamber, powerless and lethargic. Earine knew the meaning of this. She had seen others in like manner stricken down. Admitting none except Mark Walsh, she tended Vivian assiduously, and gradually his brain recovered strength, yet not without intervals of delirious phantasy, wherein he imagined himself back in England, in the beautiful home of his boyhood.

In time his intellect regained its power, yet was less clear and calm than heretofore. And, just as he seemed almost himself again, an incident which aroused his anger caused his relapse. For, about noontide, he was lean-

ing over a kind of terrace-wall, leisurely smoking, while Earine, with a pitcher on her head, descended the marble stair to a well of pure water which was hollowed in the rock. The girl tripped downward, singing. As she came to the well, one of Vivian's ruffian crew sprang suddenly upon her and caught her in his muscular arms. Lithe as a serpent, she escaped his grasp, and, without a moment's hesitation, sprang into the sea, at least twenty feet below. The ruffian stared at her in amazement for a moment.

For only a moment. Then his soul was in the next world. Vivian, who had seen it all, snatched up a rifle that lay at hand, and a conical bullet went right through Jack Randal's brain. His corpse toppled heavily over into the water. And when Earine, dripping like Aphrodite, climbed the stairs again, she found her master lying insensible.

Again he recovered, yet not aright. There was some warp in the brain. He was seized with a strange passion for piracy. His light skiff struck terror into the navigators of these waters. There was no great gain by such depredations, for the small vessels which he seized were generally freighted with fruit—sometimes with oil and wine; but Vivian adhered to his vocation, careless of results, and just for the fun of pursuit and capture. He shed no blood all the while, neither did he seize any slaves.

This lasted a few months, during which time poor little Earine got no English lessons—received, indeed, slight notice from her lord. At home, Vivian was morose and silent; only when upon the sea, chasing some flying barque, did he seem to possess any spirit or energy. In time the Turkish authorities deemed it necessary to inquire into the acts of piracy which were reported to them; and receiving due warning hereof, Vivian determined to break up his establishment.

Not without regret. Life on an island in those magical seas—a lonely life, beyond the reach of the great worldly triumph—is a thing enjoyable. Early in the morning to see the rosy fingers of the Lady of Light withdrawing her eastern curtains, while every island of the archipelago and every wave of that delicious sea laughed welcome—at noontide to watch the cloud-films perish in the hot zenith, while the zephyrs seemed to swoon upon the breathless water—at eventide to mark the royal sunset grow dim, while the cool breeze suddenly awoke the foam: such delights as these had become a part of Vivian's life. He had enjoyed the mountain rambles, the careless cruises, the luxury of coming home late to abundant dinners of fish and game and goats' flesh, with amber Greek wine, alive with sparkling specks of vivid violet, and then the fragrant coffee and tobacco of Asia. However, the Turks would be upon him unless he fled into more civilized regions. So he acted with his customary promptitude.

Mark Walsh wanted him to disband his ruffianly followers, and leave them to their fate.

He would not hear of it. A wild fancy had fixed upon him, and he determined to follow up his piracy in the *Ægean* by a course of highway robbery in England. Nothing could turn him from this delirious decision. He sent Mark forward with the rest of the gang: he himself took Earine into France, and left her at a convent at Rouen, to finish her education. Considering what the little Greek girl's education had been, I fancy the ladies of the establishment must have had some difficulty in knowing how to finish it.

Now, Mark Walsh was a Riverdale man. That town produces a large proportion of adventurers: it hath no equal in cricketers and prize-fighters, and in Mark it had produced a singularly respectable pirate. Mark's early life had not been quite devoid of peculiarities which are deemed objectionable by the social majority; and among his sworn brethren in juvenile rascality was a Jew called Boss, whom he remembered with a quite sentimental recollection. Walsh, with his ruffians in charge, made his way naturally to his native town, and took up his quarters in a small public-house, not too public in position. Then he took to vicambulation, and lo! over the most magnificent shop in Riverdale—a shop brilliant with gold and silver plate, and blazing with superb gems—he perceived the name of Boss. Mark guessed at once that this was his old schoolfellow, and having knowledge of certain curious incidents of that Hebrew's boyhood, he recalled himself to his memory. Boss, who was doing a brilliant business of mixed honesty and dishonesty, partly as seller of plate and jewelry, partly as receiver of stolen goods, was a trifle amazed at first; but when he heard that there was a gentleman of high position concerned in the affair, it at once occurred to him that he might make a good thing of this unexpected incident. The small public-house in which Walsh and his gang had taken up their quarters happened to be the Jew's property—a convenient house for the reception of stolen goods, with a subterranean way into Boss's cellar. Here there was at once a fortunate arrangement for head-quarters. Walsh got his ruffians underground as soon as possible, and kept them there, well supplied with strong food and stronger liquors, except when they were wanted for some wild expedition.

Valentine Vivian, living in apparent quietude at Broad Oak Avon, directed these expeditions. In the curious madness which had taken possession of him, he really rejoiced in these absurd aberrations. Boss encouraged him; he made marvellous profit at the moment, and he calculated that when the inevitable time of discovery arrived, he should be safe with such a tremendous "swell" concerned. Walsh, on the other hand, was anxious to put an end to the perilous enterprise. He was a thorough rascal, but he loved his master, and he was terribly afraid of what might happen. But both these men found that Vivian, with all his obvious intellectual irregularity, was too much for them. Boss had

an impression that he might manage the captain of this extraordinary gang of robbers, but one glance of Vivian's eye was sufficient to show him that of this there was no chance. Mark Walsh attempted to dissuade his master from his ridiculous follies, but Vivian turned upon him as savagely as a tiger-cat, and Mark never ventured to say another word to him on the subject.

Hence arose the amazing series of highway robberies and burglaries which carried terror through the Riverdale district. Vivian organized, Mark Walsh carried out his instructions. The *Ægean* ruffians did as they were ordered. But, as we have seen, they grew mutinous now and then, and acted on their own impulses, and received condign punishment.

The capture of Mary Ashow made a strong impression on Vivian's mind, and brought him almost back to his senses for the moment. Had there been any one to give him some guidance, he might probably have recovered himself. But Mark Walsh was afraid of him, and there was no other human being who guessed his condition.

## CHAPTER VIII.

PARSON, POLICEMAN, AND POET.

"Your money or your life."

SQUIRE REDFERN, delighted with the recovery of Farmer Ashow's daughter Mary, gave a great dinner in honor thereof. He invited the farmer and his daughter, and of course a good many other tenants of his, to keep them company; he invited the Mayor of Riverdale and other dignitaries of the Corporation, and of course Chief Constable Severne; and he invited a few country gentlemen of his own set to meet them. It was, as Vivian remarked, rather a menagerie than otherwise. But it was not an unpleasant evening which they spent—indeed, it was on the whole rather original.

When the ladies had retired, and the male guests took seriously to their wine, there was a decided tendency to tell terrible tales of robbery in all its forms. Every body was voluble and garrulous on the subject with the exception of Severne and Vivian, neither of whom said a word, though they were Past Masters in the arts which respectively they professed and practised. Old, old stories were ventilated afresh: robbers under beds, robbers concealed in cupboards and up chimneys, had their turn. Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard were honorably mentioned. The conversation took a fine picturesque turn, and by the time the short hours arrived it seemed to be generally considered that a dashing highwayman on a thorough-bred mare ought to be a perfectly happy man, and to be grateful to Providence for the position which he felicitously occupied.

There was but one dissident—Lionel Wray, parson of the parish. He told both Squire and farmer, in set terms, that their talk was low



and lax; he moreover said, sternly, as if he were preaching a sermon, that, with the utmost horror of bloodshed, he would instantly shoot any man who ventured to attack him.

All this time a wild and desperate devil was fretting Vivian's mobile uncontrollable brain. He had sat quietly watching and listening. He liked to see the stolid faces of the country gentlemen and farmers moved a little by the idea of robbery. He liked even more to watch Mr. Severne, who sat with a slight smile upon amused lips, hearing the ridiculous stories gravely told by these queer old fogies.

By-and-by the Reverend Lionel Wray rose from the table, setting a good cleric example, and started to ride homeward. He had been gone about a quarter of an hour when Vivian quietly left the table, saddled his favorite mare, and started in pursuit. He wanted to test the parson's boast.

It was a night of the full moon. As Lionel Wray trotted quietly homeward, he was suddenly encountered by a man on horseback, wearing a black mask. True to his system, he drew out a pistol, but the sharp shock of the loaded end of a riding-whip disabled his right arm, and he was at the highwayman's mercy in a moment. Quickly was he despoiled of his gold watch and a few loose sovereigns, and left to ride home in melancholy mood.

The whole affair did not take half an hour—within three quarters at the utmost Vivian was back in his seat at table. It is so customary in these days for a man to go quietly out for fresh air and a cigar, that nobody noticed his movements. The night was late when the party broke up. Somewhat noisily they were grouped at the great gates of Broadoak Avon, while horses and carriages and traps were brought up, and each man lighted pipe or cigar before he started.

Even the quiet cool Chief Constable lighted a short pipe when he had mounted his strong steady cob. Having watched him off, Vivian went up to the drawing-room, and chaffed the Squire on his dinner party, and wished Lady Eva good-night. Then he passed out upon the terrace, and made his way to where the Arab mare had been left after his last adventure. Instead of returning to the stables, he had brought her to a quiet corner in the grounds. He leaped into the saddle, and started at a hand-gallop towards a point at which he expected to intercept the Chief Constable.

He was right in his calculation. He had reined up the mare beneath a big oak-tree, entirely in shadow, and she stood like a rock. Knowing that Severne was a stronger man than himself, likely to be at least as prompt, and very sure to be armed, he took quick aim at the head of the cob and shot the unlucky animal. Severne came to the ground heavily; Vivian also leaped to the ground, and discovered that the Chief Constable was scarcely sensible. It took but a minute to get possession of his watch, purse, pocket-book, and pistols; which done,

our amateur highwayman left him to his fate, and rode home at a gallop.

Imagine, if you can, the consternation of every body in the town at Riverdale, and all through the county, when the news spread next morning of the highwayman's daring. The abduction of Mary Ashow had produced immense amazement; but the occurrence of two highway robberies in one night, and that the Chief Constable should be one of the victims, caused greater excitement still. The quidnuncs who frequent the Riverdale market-place of a morning, and exchange gossip while they choose their fish for dinner, were overflowing with the topic. The highwayman was a magnified mystery. He was more than six feet high, according to one authority, mounted on an enormous coal-black horse, whose eyes were like balls of fire. He was invulnerable; the parson's bullet had gone through him without hurting him; the Chief Constable had struck him with a heavy riding-whip, and produced not the slightest effect. He had the power of making himself invisible—he appeared from an empty space when he encountered Mr. Severne. Such were some of the wildest exaggerations of Riverdale gossip; people a trifle too sagacious to listen to these were the victims of other misstatements, scarcely less absurd.

Poor Severne, stunned by his fall, had taken some time to recover. When he did so, he found himself lying in the dusty road, with his good cob dead beside him. Very painfully and slowly did he make his way to Riverdale. When he entered the town, he went straight to his head-quarters and made official record of his own misfortune. The news spread—soon inquisitive reporters arrived, with a view of obtaining intelligence for the second editions of their respective daily papers, whereof there are three in Riverdale. The small boys of the town were soon screaming at the top of their voices—"Guardian!" "Gazette!" "Express!" Second edition! Two highway robberies! The Chief Constable robbed and nearly murdered!" There was quite a panic in the place. The shopkeepers in the Rope Walk stood at the doors of their shops, under the long row of massive columns, and let business go to Jericho. Pious folk, who were going to morning service at St. Chad's, turned aside to listen, and were too late for prayers. Excitement filled men's minds just as the great flood of summer sunshine filled the market-square: nobody could think of any thing except the deeds of the mysterious highwayman.

Archdeacon Coningsby, that famous member of the church militant, came, after morning prayers, across the market-place to his favorite bookseller's. Clothed though he was in broad-brimmed headgear, with knee-breeches and gaiters on his shapely legs, the Archdeacon looked more martial than half the officers in Her Majesty's service. At the aforesaid bookseller's, which, you are doubtless aware, is also the office of that excellent Tory and High-Church

journal, the "Riverdale Guardian," he heard an accurate account of the transactions, and chuckled over the discomfiture of his reverend brother, Lionel Wray. He was mightily amused by the panic in Riverdale, and not greatly displeased by the ill-luck of poor Severne, whom, as a Cambridge man turned constable, this Oxford dignitary somewhat despised.

Then there was a special meeting of the Watch Committee—the Mayor, a Conservative grocer named Skinner, in the chair. The florid and pugnacious Cox, leader of the Radicals in the Town Council, attacked the Mayor for having dined with "a 'aughty harrystocrat," and moved a vote of censure upon Severne for having done likewise, to the great neglect of his duty. There was a general row. The Mayor, who had dined remarkably well, supplementing a curious mixture of Squire Redfern's wines with a copious share of several bowls of magnificent punch, was not in a mood to control the storm; and so Cox, who had not dined in similar fashion, carried matters just as he pleased, and passed his ridiculous vote of censure by a majority of two. Severne was called in to hear the result.

"Gentlemen," he said very quietly, "although for the moment baffled by a most crafty organization, I do not consider that I deserve this censure. Under ordinary circumstances I should resign at once, but I deem it my duty, in the first instance, to discover this nest of robbers. When that is done, which I hope will be very soon indeed, I will place my resignation in your hands."

Of course, as Riverdale this morning hummed through all its streets and shops with gossip, as a lime avenue hums with bees when the blossom is sweetest, there had been plenty of such colloquy at Boss's emporium of jewelry. At about noon the wily Hebrew received an intimation that Mark Walsh wanted to see him, so he descended to the cellar, and they held private conference beyond all earshot.

"This is the captain's doing—eh, Mark?" said the Jew.

"Yes. He did it for fun. I had orders to meet him this morning, and he told me all about it. When he takes a thing of this sort into his head nothing can stop him."

"It can't go on much longer," said Boss, gloomily.

Boss had two eyes that resolutely refused to act together, so that the expressions of his countenance were unlike those of all ordinary mortals.

"The captain got Severne's pocket-book," said Walsh, "and read his memorandums. He is on our track. He had it put down that he suspected you in connection with these robberies, and that inquiry must be made about the public-house called *The Jolly Cricketers*. You see, this is serious."

"My God! I am ruined!" exclaimed the Jew. "What is to be done? Tell me, Mark

Walsh. They will transport me if they find this out."

"Serve you right," said Walsh, with the utmost coolness. "However, the captain has thought of all this. I have orders to take the men away by rail to Portsmouth to-night. Before they go he advises you to make them block up the gate of communication between the cellars with sand, covering it completely on both sides. When they are out of the way, and all traces of them removed, you are pretty safe. You haven't any stolen property about?"

"Every thing is melted," said Boss. "But there is the old farmer's safe, which the captain wouldn't have opened."

"That is to go back to the farm. I must move it away this evening before the men start."

"What! does he mean to return it, after all the trouble it cost? He is mad!"

"Of course he is; not for returning it, but for taking it at all. Never mind, Boss, you haven't lost by him; and if you are careful, you won't. Now, there's no time to lose. I'll set the fellows at work in the cellar, if you like; you have the safe ready to put in the cart as soon as it is dusk."

It is not necessary to follow Mark Walsh and his ruffians to Portsmouth. They were glad enough to go: they had lived under-ground long enough, and longed for a change. Besides, they were all sailors by habit; and when Mark got them to Portsmouth, he found no difficulty in persuading them to return to the sea again. There was a demand for able seamen. Mark saw them all safely on board some craft or other; and then, obeying his master's orders, he crossed to France, with a letter for Earine, who was at the Rouen convent, under the name of Miss Delisle.

Meanwhile there were fresh causes for amazement in the Riverdale neighborhood. When Farmer Ashow came down stairs in the early morning, lo! there was his beloved safe just outside the door! He uttered an exclamation—every body came to see—yes, it was the very safe, and its contents proved to be intact. Nor was this all. There came a parcel by rail to the Rev. Lionel Wray—it contained his watch, the loose sovereigns, and an apologetic note, requesting him to accept a diamond ring which was inclosed. There came also a railway parcel to Mr. Severne—it contained his property, and Bank of England notes to the amount of fifty pounds, which he was asked to accept as some slight compensation for the loss of his horse. The writer in both cases professed his sorrow for having indulged in a foolish freak; and his regret seemed really sincere for the death of Mr. Severne's cob. The parcels came from Dover.

These singular incidents very much perplexed the public, and supplied material to the local newspapers for many imaginative leading articles.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SEARCH AT "THE JOLLY CRICKETERS."

"A very quaint and questionable tavern,  
And underneath it a mysterious cavern."

VIVIAN, who knew every thing, knew cryptography in its most intricate involutions. So, when he got hold of the Chief Constable's pocket-book, he addressed himself to deciphering certain mysterious memoranda which he saw therein. It is an elementary maxim that any enigma constructed by man can be solved by man; hieroglyphics and arrow-headed characters have been forced to yield their secret signification; and there seems no unsolved puzzle left except the epitaph on *Ælia Lælia Crispis*, which, in all probability, is a mere hoax. The majority of mankind may be of the *Davus* tribe, but there is sure to exist an *Œdipus* somewhere. The amazing advertisements which fond lovers used to put in the second column of the "Times" have become more rare since some mischievous people took the trouble to decipher and explain them for the benefit of the public. Vivian made out the meaning of Severne's recondite entries, and found among them clear evidence that Boss was suspected. He acted with his customary promptitude; Severne, if on any reasonable pretext he could have instituted an immediate search of the jeweller's would have found nothing to sustain his theory. But no such pretext could be devised.

Boss was a man of the highest respectability, a member of the Town Council, a giver of excellent dinners, and a liberal contributor to the local charities. How could he venture, on mere suspicion, to hint at the possibility that the Jew was a receiver of stolen property?

Most of the municipal authorities of Riverdale were of the average type—men with whom it was useless for Severne to take counsel. There was, however, a single exception—Mr. Paget, the banker, an alderman and a magistrate, who, by education and connection, was lifted above the ordinary provincial level. Severne resolved to ask his advice in confidence. Meanwhile, he made arrangements to watch the vicinity both of Boss's establishment and of the suspected public-house.

He found Mr. Paget in the bank-parlor, occupied, not in financial business, but in the translation of Homer into English blank verse. This had been for some years his favorite amusement. Wherever he went he carried a small interleaved "Iliad," and worked away with his pencil whenever he had a moment to spare. The old gentleman took off his spectacles laid down his massive old-fashioned gold pencil-case on his beloved volume, and listened patiently to Severne's statements.

"I am quite willing to believe that you may be right about Boss," he remarked, "but how are you to get at him? I have always thought there was something queer about the fellow. But without some tangible evidence, you have

no more right to search his establishment than mine."

"It is impossible, of course. The public-house I mentioned we can examine, for it has always borne a bad character, and been a harbor for thieves and tramps. But Boss is beyond our reach, unless we should be fortunate enough to get at the truth through some accomplice."

"If your hypothesis is correct," said the old banker, "there must still be somebody behind Boss in the affair. Depend on it, that Hebrew would never return any thing he once got hold of. It is difficult to believe in such things in the present time, but this last transaction looks like the freak of some hot-blooded youth. You don't know anybody of that kind in the neighborhood, do you, Severne? It seems a sort of Gads-hill adventure—a frolic of the mad Prince and Pains."

A sudden idea flashed upon the Chief Constable's mind. After a moment's thought he said:

"There is Mr. Vivian, the gentleman staying at Broadoak Avon. It never occurred to me till this instant. The county patrol tell me he is often riding about the country at all hours of the night. And he has been abroad a great deal, leading a reckless sort of life, they say. He was at the dinner, of course; and there was much wild talk of the way in which you should treat a highwayman. Perhaps he did this last trick for fun. But then, on the other hand, he seems to have come unexpectedly to Farmer Ashow's just after the robbery there, and to have done all he could to help us. He sent a messenger to me at once."

"He is a son of Sir Alured Vivian's," said the banker, "and there has been some hot blood in the family. His great-grandfather was a determined Jacobite, and narrowly escaped attainer. But I have always heard that this was far too clever a fellow to turn highwayman. And he certainly can not want money."

Severne did not reply. He was trying to recall the incidents or the attack upon himself. He wanted to remember the appearance of his assailant. But the whole affair had been so rapid that his memory was baffled.

"There may be a clue in this direction," he said at length. "I have been trying to trace the bank-notes I received—there were ten five-pound notes—but it is almost impossible to find out any thing about them. One or two have names indorsed upon them, and I have communicated with the indorsers."

"You must not expect much from that. Small notes are almost as untraceable as sovereigns. If a man writes his name on one, he will not remember to whom he paid it."

"Well, I must watch this young gentleman in future, as well as Mr. Boss. But I propose to examine *The Jolly Cricketers* public-house to-day. I shall take it among several other houses of questionable character, so as not to make the landlord think we suspect him more than others."

Severne, accompanied by a couple of his best officers, made his tour of inspection. He found *The Jolly Cricketers* unusually quiet and respectable. The landlord was ostentatiously grumbling over his want of custom. Severne, having gone through the upper part of the house, required to see the cellars. They were reached by a staircase cut in the sandy rock; half-way down there was a circular chamber, with rough seats cut in the walls. In this place the Riverdale people had been in the habit of enjoying cock-fights, when that noble sport was prohibited by the law. I am told that the hotels and taverns of the town are full of such arrangements, and that cock-fighting in Riverdale was a fashionable sport long after it had been elsewhere forgotten.

The cellars, with a few beer casks in them, were dreary enough by the insufficient light which the police carried. Severne examined them as carefully as he could, but the light was insufficient. Any body who has tried to conquer subterranean darkness with candles will be aware of the difficulty. The Chief Constable sent one of his men to the upper air with a message to the nearest chemist; he presently returned with a coil of magnesium wire. The splendid flame soon did good service; for it showed clearly that there had been recent digging in the sandy substance of the floor, and that the form of the cellar had undergone some alteration.

"I shall leave you here in charge, White," Severne said to one of his men. "We'll have some fellows in with spades, and see what all this means. Were you ever down here before?"

"No, sir; I think Cowan was."

"He shall come over, then. But what is that?"

The magnesium light had suddenly flashed upon something brilliant which lay on the cellar floor. Severne picked it up. It was a diamond shirt-stud of remarkably fine water.

"Don't say a word about this to any body," he whispered. "It is more like a clue than any thing we have found yet. Keep quiet, and we may make a good thing of this."

Feeling somewhat sanguine, Severne started to give his orders, determined to excavate a little, and see whether the cellar contained any more mysteries. But before returning to the cellar, he went hastily to the bank, and communicated his discovery to Mr. Paget.

"I can't help thinking," he said, "that this is just the sort of stud Boss would be likely to wear. It is rather too fine for a real gentleman. You don't happen to have noticed any thing of the sort when you have met him, I suppose, sir?"

"Why, yes, it is rather singular that I have. I was at his shop a month or two ago, with my granddaughter, who bought a brooch, and she said to me afterwards that she had never seen such splendid diamond studs on such a frightfully dirty shirt."

"Perhaps the young lady would remember them. Would you object to asking her?"

"Not in the least. I'll order my carriage and drive to my son's house, and be here again in half an hour. Come up as soon as you have finished excavating."

Severne and his men were alone in the cellar when the stud was found, so there was no possibility of Boss's hearing of this cause of suspicion against him. But when the landlord saw a whole posse of police arrive with shovels and pickaxes, as if they were about to dig a mine, he lost no time in causing the jeweller to be informed of these perilous movements.

Boss's alarm may easily be imagined. He had done a little quiet business in receiving stolen goods for many years. A stolen watch was brought to the worthy landlord of *The Jolly Cricketers*, he asked no questions, gave certain money for it, and passed it on at once to his employer. This sort of thing went on quietly enough; but in an evil day Boss was induced by hopes of greater gain to give harborage to Walsh and his followers, thinking he should find some way of getting out of the scrape. Unluckily Vivian's fierce and resolute temper was too much for him—he could not keep the gang within moderate limits of daring; and now Walsh and the rest were beyond the reach of the police, and there was no one who could help him in his difficulty.

True, there was Vivian; but the Jew was afraid of him. He had seen him in a passion, had heard of his stern dealings with mutineers. There was no guessing what this hasty young gentleman might do if matters came to the worst. Besides, as he had ordered off all his followers, perhaps he also was beyond the reach of harm by this time. Boss was in a state of abject terror.

Sometimes he thought he would secure his safety by informing against his confederates. But what a terrible fall for him—a municipal magnate—to confess himself a felon! He could not bring himself to this decided step. There *must* be some way of escape, if he could only find it. When the most ingenious rascal is regularly driven into a corner, his wits often desert him. Boss saw the police must inevitably discover the communication between the two cellars, and that the discovery could scarcely fail to ruin him. He sat in his private room, revolving the situation with a confused brain and a haggard face, and every moment expecting to see the door open and a policeman enter.

Meanwhile Severne's men were hard at work. The earth was shovelled away with which the iron gate had been concealed, and that portal was discovered. But where did it lead? There was earth also on the other side; and if there had not been, of course Boss's gas had long been extinguished, and his cellars were as dark as the grave. Now it became necessary to call in the blacksmith, and his part of the business was tardy and difficult, for the gate

was heavy and the lock of complex construction. Severne, fretting with impatience, availed himself of the delay to pay another visit to Mr. Paget, to whom he reported progress.

"Well," said the banker, "I am curious to know where you will emerge. It would be odd if you found yourself in some other person's cellar, after all."

"And what does the young lady say to the stud?"

"She thinks it very like those she noticed, but is not quite sure of it."

"I got a clever detective down from London to do any work which my men could not manage. How would it be to send him to Boss's with the stud, under the pretext of having picked it up, and wanting to know its value?"

"A very good idea," said Mr. Paget.

So the Jew was attacked on both sides—by force and by subtlety. As he sat ruminating in his private room, one of his shopmen knocked at the door, and announced that a person wished to speak to him. In a tremor of anticipation Boss entered the shop, and saw an individual who might have been almost any thing in the world—except a gentleman. He looked shrewd enough for a betting-man, respectable enough for a bank-clerk, genial enough for a commercial traveller.

"Beg pardon for troubling you, sir," he said.

"I'm a stranger here, and a few days ago I picked up a little article of jewelry, and I thought I'd inquire at a respectable shop what it is worth, and what I had better do with it."

"Perhaps this is a plant," thought Boss.

"Come this way," he said; and showed him into the room he had just left.

"It is a pretty thing," said the stranger, producing the stud.

Boss recognized his own property, and felt reassured. He did not know where he had dropped it, and, fearing it might have been in the cellars, had made no inquiry. But now he did not doubt that it had been lost in the street.

"This is mine," he said. "I shall be glad to pay you a fair reward for its recovery."

"But how am I to know it is yours?" rejoined the stranger, taking it back from him.

"I have two others exactly like it, which you shall see."

He went to the shop to fetch them. As he returned, he heard the sound of many footsteps, and was appalled to see a party of police, carrying lanterns and spades, ascending the steps which led from the lower part of his premises.

## CHAPTER X.

### VIVIAN SOLILOQUIZES.

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."

"It is perfectly certain," thought Vivian to himself, lazily lying on a couch in his private sitting-room at Broadoak Avon, "that I am an awful fool. All our family have been fools so

long as there is any record of them, which is a confoundedly long period; but I am the worst of the whole race. I suppose that it was that sun-stroke which did it: I was never quite a lunatic before, and now I am as mad as a hatter at a moment's notice. I wonder why hatters are madder than other people.

"What ought I to do with a lucid interval, when I've got one like the present? I suppose the correct thing would be to start off to Colney Hatch, and request them to put me in a strait waistcoat. Shall I do it? I think not. It is pleasanter to sit here and smoke and drink iced cup. Only the worst of it is that I shall be doing something more desperate than ever. There's a fiend driving me to do things I hate and despise. I verily believe that story of Faust and Mephistopheles, only my demon is more mischievous than Faust's, and makes me do rascallier things. I am awfully afraid I shall carry off Eva some day, or that pretty plump Mary Ashow, that looks as melting a morsel as a beccafico. What the deuce am I to do?"

"Faust could see his Mephistopheles, if we believe Goethe. That was an advantage, at any rate. If I could see mine, I'd either twist his neck, or he should put an end to me. There's something mean about an invisible devil. Old Luther saw his demon, and hurled an inkstand at him; but mine is a mean scoundrel, and daren't face me. I'd like to get him on the summit of an awful cliff, a thousand feet above the maddest sea, and either throw him over or go down myself. Why can not the Christians work miracles, as their Founder did? I suppose the Pope professes to cast out devils. Shall I go to Rome and try the old gentleman? He likes the English; perhaps he'd consent to operate on an Englishman with plenty of money to spare, and no prejudices to lose.

"There's no medicine for a mind diseased, according to the highest authority I know. My case is quite hopeless, if that is true; if these spiritual doctors don't know their craft. So I may just as well let my companion-fiend drive me to something desperate, and so make an end of every thing. Still, one may as well give one's self a chance. All roads lead to Rome, why shouldn't I get there by some extraordinary chance? I'll talk to a priest first. Plenty in Riverdale, no doubt.

"Ah, but there's one nearer. I remember, in the autumn, I rode through Avoncliff, and saw the prettiest little gem of a Catholic chapel. Just below the Castle it was, with the river making green the margin of its small grave-yard. And close by were some conventual buildings. That's nearer than Rome, at any rate. I'll ride over and see what sort of a priest they've got there. Any priest may be Pope in time, so any priest is as good as the Pope.

"Whose picture is that of the devil playing chess with some fellow for his soul? I've been at that game for a good many years, and every moment expect to hear Satan say, '*Checkmate in two moves.*' But if I can get a priest at my

elbow—not a mere Anglican, but a good black Jesuit—perhaps it will be just the other way, and I shall be able to checkmate Cuvier's graminivorous friend. Egad, I'll try. These fellows ought to know the moves. What a lark it would be to shut him up! He'd go off in a blaze, I suppose, and leave a fine fragrance of sulphur behind him.

"Yes, I'll try."

Whereupon Vivian packed a few things into a knapsack, ordered round his favorite bay mare, and rode away through the park. Just at the gates he met lady Eva in her pony-carriage.

"I am going away for a day or two, Eva," he said. "Excuse me to Rupert. He knows my irregular habits."

Avoncliff village is only about four miles from Broadoak Avon. It is a picturesque old *vicus*, with some of the oddest old-fashioned houses in it that I have seen anywhere—quaint picturesque buildings with rare old gardens, and a general look of cosiness and port-wine about them. It has three streets, which form a kind of scalene triangle, surrounding a large open slope of meadow-land where once stood the great Priory of Avoncliff, and where still remains the fragment of a gateway. Two or three rivulets intersect the village, bubbling through orchards, and supplying water to some tanyards in the valley before they reach the Avon.

Between Avoncliff and the river are the enormous ruins of one of England's noblest baronial castles. Half the mansions in the county have been dug out of this vast edifice, yet its remains would still furnish material for a dozen rows of the Marquis of Westminster's huge buildings. It is worth while, to pay Cerberus his necessary two-pence, and climb some winding stair in a remote turret of the lordly pile, and look from its summit across the plain which Avon brightens, while shadows of flying clouds traverse the rich landscape. Even in its ruin, Avoncliff Castle bears witness to the greatness of the extinct forces which caused its existence. The barons of England are gone, as absolutely as the patricians of Rome; if any body builds a castle now, it is the *generator* or the railway contractor. Not such castles as this, though; this nineteenth century has its capacities, but could no more produce an Avoncliff Castle than a York Minster or a *Hamlet*.

One of the quaintest houses in the village is its principal inn, the *Talbot*—kept by one John Talbot, who is very proud of the coincidence of name and sign. A short ruddy old host is he, who brews his own ale and drinks it, and is himself the best possible advertisement of its quality. To this inn Vivian rode, gave his mare to a hostler, and entered the public-room. The majority of English country inns are surrendered to the commercial traveller, and a wayfarer of any other kind is horror-stricken by the furniture and the society of what is styled the "commercial-room." But the *Talbot* is saved from this by the fact that numerous visitors to Avoncliff Castle require entertainment.

So Vivian found himself in rather a pleasant parlor, whose bow-window looked across the Priory-fields. At his demand for refreshment, a neat-handed waitress appeared, and he was supplied with a monster cheese of double Gloucester, and some strong home-brewed ale in a huge silver tankard, whereon a talbot was emblazoned. Therewith came crisp lettuce and radish, and water-cresses from the neighboring brook. What a picture is a fair fresh sallad arranged by an artist's hand! The deft artistic fingers should of course be feminine.

Vivian, having made a hearty luncheon, confided to the pretty waitress that he should want dinner and a bed, and then strolled out to find the Catholic chapel which he recollected, and to carry out his new notion. The little edifice was soon found. Its grave-yard was cool beneath summer foliage, and on the grassy tombs were crosses and coronals of flowers. Especially did these abound in that part of the ground where—a beautiful arrangement—all the young children lay. *Delia lilia date*, says an ancient Latin epitaph. Alas! how vain to strew flowers which loving fingers never more can grasp!

The chapel door stood open; a dim religious light pervaded the interior; but Vivian could see candles burning on the altar, and fragrant flowers in pots around it. The atmosphere seemed rather overlaid with odor. Vivian walked round the chapel and leaned over the wall, looking meditatively at the river which ran beneath. As he expected, he was soon joined by a priest. An Anglican parson, if he sees a stranger within his precincts, gets out of his way; a priest of the Roman communion does just the reverse.

This priest was a man not more than thirty; tall, dark of complexion, with the darkest eyes Vivian had ever seen. They looked as if the light had faded in them—as if they had burnt out; but now and then they shone with a sudden lustre. After an interchange of complimentary conversation, the two men began a serious dialogue. I quote a portion of it.

*Vivian.* "I came here to find a priest."

*The Priest.* "You are a Catholic?"

*Vivian.* "No; I am nothing. I was born a member of the Church of England, you know. English gentlemen generally are."

*The Priest.* "May I ask if you are married?"

*Vivian.* "I am not. Ask what questions you please: my answers will usually be negative. I am a negation. But let me tell you briefly what I want. I am mad, sometimes. It seems as if a fiend possessed me, and drove me to do things entirely against my own will. You have heard of such cases?"

*The Priest.* "Of very many."

*Vivian.* "Can you exorcise the demon?"

*The Priest.* "It has been done. It is possible, sometimes. At any rate, the Church can fether the fiend. I am myself in your condition. My demon is bound so that he can not escape, but he tugs terribly at his chain sometimes."

Vivian. "It is curious that I should come to you."

The Priest. "It was appointed. I will tell you my story, but not now: I have a service to perform. Then, if you please, you can tell me yours."

Vivian. "Come and dine with me at the *Talbot* at six. Afterwards we can talk at our ease."

Rather to Vivian's surprise, the priest at once accepted. Then he entered his chapel to perform service, while Vivian lighted a cigar, and went to pass an hour amid the ruins of Avoncliff Castle.

Vivian found his sacerdotal visitor very pleasant company. He was not like a good many of these gentlemen, an Irish alumnus of Maynooth; nor was he a mystic and sentimental Oxfordman, pervert by poverty of brain. He belonged to an old Cheshire family, which had never deserted the ancient faith. He was an admirable scholar, and possessed besides an immense store of recondite learning. After a simple country dinner of trout from the Avon, and a couple of capons, they sat over a bottle of excellent Madeira, highly recommended by the host, and talked very pleasantly.

But as the evening darkened, the priest grew silent, and after a long break in the conversation, during which Vivian enjoyed his cigar, he abruptly said—

"Now will you hear my story?"

"With pleasure," said Vivian, and settled himself into a listening attitude.

Story-tellers, under ordinary circumstances, are bores, I allow; but there are times when I like them. You have dined, you are smoking a good weed, you have a bottle of sound wine close at hand. I maintain that it is rather amusing to hear a fellow prying away at a tremendous loss, like the affable archangel in "*Paradise Lost*," or that quaint "*Marinere*" of Coleridge's. I think I should prefer the seaman to the seraph.

Vivian listened to the priest, and rather enjoyed his narrative, although it contained incidents which, since this is not a sensational romance, I dare not print. The grand finale of the story was intelligible and suggestive. The narrator was not a priest at the commencement. He held a commission in Her Majesty's army; but, the victim of demoniac possession, he committed a series of romantic crimes. Such was his statement. However, he was saved from eternal perdition by the sole possible method—namely, becoming a priest. That was the obvious panacea.

"Ah," thought Vivian, "I remember the beggar asked me if I was married. He wants to make a priest of me. Not if I know it! I suspect that story of his is a tissue of lies. Now, if I were to confess to him all my slight improprieties, he'd have me in his power. I think I'll wait."

So he made no response whatever to his priestly acquaintance's confession, and took no no-

tice of his subtle suggestions. There was method in his madness. He walked with him to the very gate of his domain, and sauntered back smoking, and confided to his cigar his opinion that he had nearly put his foot in it.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CONFESSIONAL.

"Confesser une femme! imaginez ce que c'est!"

VIVIAN got, in the course of a few days, upon very intimate terms with his priest. He staid at the *Talbot*, but he passed a good deal of his time at the priest's dwelling, which was a residence specially designed for discomfort. And he gradually discovered, from slight signs and slighter self-betrays, that the priest was an accomplished member of the Society of Jesus, and that he was quietly perverting the Protestant women of the neighborhood in a most successful way. There was the festival of a favorite feminine saint approaching, and the priest expected a large number of pretty penitents—many of them lambs from the rival fold.

This discovery awakened in Vivian's brain that mischievous imp that acted as his evil genius. He rode over to Riverdale, and thence took train to London, and supplied himself with certain chemicals, whereof chloroform was one. I always objected to ants till chloroform was invented. Vivian returned from town with his little scientific package of murder and mystery and mesmerism, and unscrupulously used it upon his sacerdotal friend. As a necessary consequence, when the naughty feminine perverts of the neighborhood crowded to the confessional of the little chapel, Vivian was behind the bars.

He acquitted himself well. He heard a great many secrets, and dealt mercifully with them. But among the ladies who came to confess, there were two whose arrival surprised him. One was Lady Eva Redfern: the other was Mary Ashow.

Both were easily accounted for. Lady Eva came of a half-Catholic race, and was merely returning towards an inherited pre-disposition. Mary had been at a boarding-school where there were a good many Romanist pupils, and the confessional had attracted her, as it does most girls. And, when a priest came to Avoncliff with singularly magnetic powers, it is not remarkable that these young women were drawn towards him.

At any rate, they came on this day when a false priest was in the confessional, and they both told him their stories in a very simple fashion.

The first to arrive was Mary Ashow. Vivian, crouching in the sacerdotal niche, was amazed to see the innocent fair hair and soft blue eyes through the stone interstices; he of course knew nothing of her tendency to Catholicism.

The shy young maiden had heretofore been troubled with no difficulties of confession. Hers had hitherto been trivial peccadilloes. She had

been cross to her father, perhaps, or had neglected some small duty: it was impossible for her to recollect anything wickeder than that. But on this occasion she had come prepared to confess a terrible crime. She had fallen in love—at least she thought she had—and with a gentleman of high position, whom she had only seen a few times. She was a very simple maiden. She was quite well aware that it was foolish and wrong to listen to Vivian's pleasant words, uttered so musically; knew, indeed, that he really meant nothing at all, but was merely amusing himself. But her pretty bosom fluttered whenever he came near her—and she was terrified by the strange phenomenon of which she had no previous experience. There was no other man in the world whose presence produced any such effect upon her.

It took some time, after she had confessed her minor delinquencies, for her to put into words the great crime of all. But at last she did it, and Vivian had the satisfaction of knowing that the foolish little girl was in love with him.

"Has he ever spoken of love to you?" asked the pseudo-priest, in a stern tone.

"No, your reverence," whispered Mary, "but he said I had beautiful blue eyes and rosy lips."

"Eyes and lips, little girl," said the stern voice from the marble niche, "are delusions of the Evil One. Beauty is a misfortune: ugliness is a gift of God. This gentleman of whom you tell me is a wicked person: you must avoid him. Never speak to him if you can help it. Whenever you do speak to him, you must perform a penance."

"Hang it!" thought Vivian, parenthetically; "I wish I knew what sort of penance to inflict in such a case. The silly little thing wants a whipping, but I don't know the priestly way of putting it."]

There had been a pause. He resumed his discourse—

"Forget this gentleman of whom you tell me—forget all the nonsense he has talked to you. The ugliest men are the most honorable. You are pretty and foolish, and therefore in the way of temptation. If you must marry, my daughter, marry the ugliest man you know."

"That's good advice," said Vivian to himself, "for John Grainger is the ugliest man she is likely to see, and John is a good fellow, and just the right sort to marry her. Egad, I wish one might smoke a cigar in this close little crib!"

Vivian confessed two or three giggling Avoncliff young ladies after this, and then came his second surprise.

*Lady Eva Redfern knelt before him.*

Have you ever seen a beautiful pale blossom of magnolia smitten and burnt through by the sunlight, till its faint fragrance is caught away, and its fair petals are dyed a dark unnatural hue? Beautiful Lady Eva, as she knelt on the stone steps of the confessional, looked to Vivian like such a bloom. Her brown eyes were of a deeper color; there was a strange dark flush

upon her face, which was seen through her quivering eyelids, which changed the hue of her cheeks. A perceptible shudder ran through her as she fell upon her knees, little dreaming that the man before whom she knelt was the man whose influence she dreaded.

And Vivian? If there had been any way of deserting the confessional, he would have got clear away the moment he saw his cousin. No such way existed. He was compelled to remain and listen to her confession, and so he resolved to do the best he could under the circumstances.

Her confession did not surprise him. There was a touch of subtle self-analysis about it. She loved her husband—yes, she was quite sure of that; but she had a cousin who exerted a strange influence over her, and who seemed able to make her do just what he pleased. He took no advantage of this; he treated her just like a child. But she loved him, and was afraid of him, . . . and what was she to do?

"Well," thought Vivian, "this is a very singular coincidence. Two fair penitents, and both in love with the priest. Poor little Eva! I could find it in my heart to run away with her, if she were not my own cousin. Girls with any brain ought not to marry big men."]

This soliloquy took less time to utter than it does to read. Vivian was about to commence a grave lecture to his cousin, when his quick eye caught through the open doorway of the chapel a rapidly-advancing group. He recognized his acquaintance, the tall priest, and he thought one or two of the men with him looked very like members of the rural police.

He sprang out of his niche into the vestry, to the amazement of Lady Eva, and several female penitents who waited to be shriven. As the priest and his companions arrived at the church porch, Vivian started towards the *Talbot*. Swift as a hare, it took him a very few minutes to reach that establishment; he went straight to the stables, got out his mare, and was off at a pretty quick pace before the good priest had quite realized the fact that a Satanic *sacerdos* had been confessing his pet penitents.

Meantime, Vivian rode away in a merry mood. The adventure had arried him. He thought it singularly amusing, and hoped the two young ladies would recover from their heart-disease. He made the mare travel that day, and, at a late hour in the evening, he reached a solitary roadside inn. It was called the *Peacock*; had been, in the grand old days of mail-coaches, a famous house; stood now alone, miles from any other dwelling, upon a road which ran through wild desolate moorland. Why it was kept open, and how the landlord managed to live, were grave problems to his neighbors, the nearest of whom lived five miles away; but he, John Pinnell, did keep it open, and seemed to flourish without any appearance of custom. His rooms were kept in order as complete as when thirty coaches a day stopped at the *Peacock* to dine.

Vivian came hither quite by accident, never



having been in this part of the country previously. He had ridden forward aimlessly, choosing his road by mere impulse, and asking no questions at the two or three wayside inns where he stopped to give the mare refreshment. The latter part of his journey had been singularly desolate; it lay across wild bleak moors which formed the boundary between a county of park and forest and a county of mountain and ravine; and he rode for miles without seeing a human habitation, or even a human being. At length he emerged upon the Great North Road—not so wide a royal highway as in the days before steam, yet still a noble contrast to the lanes and bridle-paths which he had been traversing for hours. He pursued this for two or three miles, wondering whether he should meet with any place of refuge before night came on. By-and-by he beheld most welcome lights, and there was the *Peacock* inn, its lower windows sending out an inviting blaze upon the dark dull road.

"Here I'll sleep," thought Vivian.

A primitive kind of hostler took charge of his mare. But Vivian was not going to desert her; she had served him well that day, and many a time previously, and so he saw her comfortably fed and bedded before he thought of himself.

Then he walked into the bar, where a good fire was burning—not unacceptably, since the summer evening was cooled by a dry east wind. The sole occupant of the bar was the landlord, a man of middle height, but immense breadth, with iron-gray hair, and a fine robust rosy countenance. He was gravely smoking a long pipe, and drinking a hot mixture, whose fragrance revealed the presence of "old Jamaica."

"Good-evening, landlord," said our traveller. "I want some supper and a bed."

"You can have it, sir," said the landlord cheerily. "Polly, where are you?" he shouted.

Polly appeared. She was a thin old woman of about sixty, with a quaint pleasant face.

"What can this gentleman have for supper?" asked her master.

"Eggs and bacon," she responded, promptly.

"Nothing else?"

"Well, there may be some other things, but I thought them Londoners always liked eggs and bacon when they came into the country."

"Any thing will do for me," said Vivian.

"I am as hungry as a hunter."

"Ah, you're the sort of gentleman I like," said the old woman—"not like that bagman that was here the other day, and declared he *must* have roast duck and green peas. I served him out. I cooked him our old drake, that had his leg broke just in time. But *you* shall have some supper, sir."

Pending its arrival, Vivian lighted a cigar, and talked to the landlord.

"Your servant seems an original," he said.

"She's got odd fancies," was the reply.

"If she likes any body, she'll make 'em right snug, Polly will; but if she doesn't, she'll serve

'em all sorts of tricks. She took a fancy to you the minute she saw you. You'll be put in the best bedroom, I can see."

"This seems a quiet place for a large inn like yours. But I suppose there are some towns in the neighborhood."

"Nothing very near. No, we haven't much custom, but I took the old place for a whim. My grandfather was landlord here in the old coaching times. Well do I remember him when I was a boy; he was six inches taller than me, and bigger every way, and he lived the life of a king here. Lots of coaches stopping, lots of post-chaises too; people, tired on their journey, staying to sleep; young folks running away to get married in Scotland; men with strings of horses from the Yorkshire fairs; why, sir, the old place was as lively as a fair itself. Well, father died young, and grandfather meant me to have the place after him; but when he was close upon seventy he got soft about a little girl of eighteen, and actually married her. She and I, I remember, were born in the same month, and I used to make love to her myself—and grandfather married her! So I thought it was pretty well time to be off out of this; and I got a little money that my poor mother had left me, and went to Australia. There I was lucky; picked up some nuggets; bought a bit of waste land in Melbourne, and sold it ten years after for as many thousands as I gave pounds for it; made money by sheep-farming, and at last came back pretty well off, and anxious to hear what had happened to my grandfather. Poor old fellow! His young wife led him a terrible life, and spent all the money he had saved, and at last ran away with a commercial traveller. Then came steam, and the coaches left the road; and grandfather found himself without any business. He was so badly off by this time that the bailiffs were in the house, and I think that killed him.

"The *Peacock* was kept open for some time after his death, but of course did not pay its expenses. When I returned it had been shut up about a year. I came back to the old place, sir, and saw grass growing in the yard, where every thing had been so brisk and busy, and all the fine old rooms shut up, and the house going to rack and ruin. I cried about it—fool that I was. I thought of grandfather standing on the steps of the front door—the biggest man in the shire—and handing up a large glass of hot brandy-and-water to his old crony, Dick Edgcombe, that used to drive the early mail. Aye, and couldn't he drive! Well, I blubbered a little, and then I made up my mind to do a very silly thing—what somebody says they call very Rome-antic—though I don't see what the Pope has to do with it. I bought the old inn, and fitted it up just as it used to be in grandfather's time; and here I live, and wish the dear old coaches would come back again.

"There's one gentleman gives me great pleasure. He comes here regularly once a month, driving four-in-hand. His uncle was a great

man for a team, but *he* didn't care about it; and when the old gentleman died, the nephew found an estate left him on condition of his driving four-in-hand a hundred miles every month in the year. He always brings his drag this way, and generally has a lot of his friends and their ladies with him. I expect he'll be here to-morrow or next day."

"I'll stay till he comes," said Vivian.

At this moment Polly entered to announce supper. Vivian found that the old lady verified her master's statement about her. She could give a good supper to people she fancied. No meagre fare of eggs and bacon had to content him; he had various viands, which I would willingly describe if my critics did not accuse me of being far too fond of describing comestibles. The charge is true enough: yet let me ask what Homer would be if the famous feeds of his heroes were omitted. However, as I narrated what Vivian and his sacerdotal guest had for dinner at Avoncliff, I won't say a word concerning the supper which Polly prepared for him at the *Peacock*.

The landlord, with his own massive hands, brought in a bottle of rare old port. Faith! you seldom see such wines in these times of Gladstone claret. In the large thin bell-glass it shone a dark imperial purple, with sparks of violet light scintillating through it. The spirit of the young Conqueror of Asia was imprisoned there. As Vivian drank it there came a calm upon his perturbed brain, and he felt in milder mood than at any time since his early days with Earine in the Greek island.

So he finished his bottle slowly, and then Polly showed him to his chamber. That antiquated *cameriste* was resolved to make him comfortable. A pleasant fire burnt on the open hearth of a vast oak-wainscoted room, wherein the great old-fashioned bedstead seemed to occupy but little space. Wax candles were burning in several silver sconces, and throwing strange gleams of light upon the quaint portraits which hung against the walls.

One of these, right opposite the foot of the bed, represented a tall old lady with an immense quantity of dishevelled gray hair. She was in antique costume, with a scarlet cloak thrown over her shoulders. There was a hideous stare in her bright blue eyes, and on her face a mixed expression of rage and terror, while her arms were stretched forward, and her white jewelled hands clenched together as if in agony. Both expression and color showed this to be the work of a great painter.

"Nice old lady to have in one's room all night," soliloquized Vivian on his pillow. "She looks as if she'd step out of the canvas and stab me. Altogether this is a queer establishment. I wish I had 'The Castle of Otranto' to read myself to sleep."

However, the old lady did not step out of her canvas, or in any way haunt him. He slept most peaceably: and when he looked at his watch in the morning, it was eleven o'clock.

He went to the window, which opened towards the high road. Brilliant sunshine gladdened the wide expanse of barren moorland, and made the little pools amid the blossoming furze look like splashes of diamond fringed with gold. The sun was too much for the east wind this morning—that aerial tormenter of man and beast had his worst sting taken out of him, and actually gave pleasant life to the scene by driving stray clouds at a great rate across the sky, and tossing the foliage of the few trees which were visible. Sunshine and moonlight, each in its way, will glorify any scene. The one gives life and power; the other gives mystery and magic.

As Vivian stood at the open window, drinking in the ozone of the moorland air, there came suddenly upon his ear the note of a bugle. I know no sound so exhilarating. It is the music of adventure; it belongs to the soldier and the hunter; it once belonged to the four-horsed coach. Vivian knew what it meant. Only two minutes, and up came a splendid team, three bright bays and a roan, driven, he could see, by a capital whip. Instantly a group formed at the inn door, and hostlers began to unharness the horses, and the passengers prepared to descend. There were ladies among them; but Vivian, being in *deshabille*, could not stay to look at them.

## CHAPTER XII.

### FOUR-IN-HAND.

"But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
That we shall miss the mail."

ALACK, Mr. Tennyson, I have missed the mail for more years than I wish to reckon—missed the wholesome travel with the wind on your face, and the passage swift, but not too swift, through ever-varying scenery, and the gay interchange of welcome and humor, and the stoppages at roadside inns, and the cheery tankard, and all the possibility of adventures. Railways are excellent things, and I wonder how the world got on without them; but twenty or thirty miles on the best line in England thrills every nerve in my body, and makes my brain throb, and causes me to feel so grimy that I abhor myself. Then the hideous smell of the engine, the dust and ashes that attack your eyes and nostrils, the fustiness of the carriages, the maniacal scream of the steam-whistle, the grinding and groaning noises of the whole machine—are not these abominations?

The Poet Laureate has ventured to versify the visions of those who expect that the air will be the highway of the future. I hope it may.

Those who have never sailed in a balloon can not conceive how perfect a mode of motion it is. In calm weather the car seems stationary; the earth seems to be descending from it or approaching it, as the case may be. And then the exquisite silence of the mid-ether—sound of the world below reaching you with increasing faintness as you rise into the serene

realm of air. And consider what a blessing the balloon system would be to those who don't travel and don't want to. What can be more irritating to a quiet man, leaning over his garden gate than to see restless people whirling by in all kinds of vehicles, raising clouds of dust and making an objectionable noise?

A landscape photographer once told me that he had never taken a picture in any part of England without discovering a clothes-line in it. Is there any spot between the four seas where you may not sometimes hear the scream of the locomotive? And, to make matters worse, the highways and by-ways are now infested by the agricultural engines.

When Vivian came down stairs he found the driver of the four-in-hand talking to the landlord in the bar. He was a good-looking, smooth-faced, florid man of forty, getting a trifle stout, and with the most amiable expression of countenance. He wore a blue coat with brass buttons.

"Your breakfast is ready as soon as you like, sir," said the landlord. "I hope you slept well. I quite forgot to tell you that Polly was going to put you in the haunted room—it's the best in the house."

"Haunted by that fierce-looking old lady, no doubt. She didn't trouble me, Mr. Pinnell. I slept most virtuously."

"Excuse me, sir," said the man of the four-in-hand, "but isn't your name Vivian?"

"Certainly it is."

"Aye, and mine's Eastlake. Don't you remember Jack Eastlake, at old Giles's?"

Old Giles, the gentleman thus irreverently mentioned, had kept a preparatory school whither Vivian went to be made ready for Eton. Eastlake, though some years his senior, remembered him, but the recollection was not reciprocal. There are men whose physical development is fluent, and who change so completely during each stage of life that they are scarcely recognizable after an absence of four or five years. There are also men whose physical character is unchangeable in essence through all changes of accident. If you had known Vivian in his babyhood, you would recognize him in the prime of life—ay, or at the age of a hundred.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Eastlake, cheerily, when the recognition had been verified, "I am so glad! What a mischievous little fellow you were at old Giles's! Let us all breakfast together. There's nobody but my daughter and my companion, a jolly little girl, and my secretary. I never could spell, you know, or write grammar; so, now I've got a lot of money, I keep a secretary. He saves me heaps of trouble."

"Your secretary has a very easy time of it, I suspect. And your daughter—how old is the young lady?"

"Upon my honor, I don't know. Somewhere between seventeen and five-and-twenty. A nice-looking girl, you'll say; but, by Jove! you should see Miss Delisle, her companion."

"Ah, Jack, Jack," said Vivian, gravely, "You are falling in love with Miss Delisle! You will be committing matrimony a second time, as if once were not enough."

Jack Eastlake laughed in his customary cheerful way. "Come along," he said; "let us go and find the girls, and have some breakfast. Polly means to give us a good breakfast, I hope, Pinnell."

"No fear about that, sir," responded the landlord.

They went to the room designed as their breakfast-room, and found no one there save the secretary. If secretaries were always chosen for their acumen, he would never have found a place. His capacities were threefold—curly hair, clerk-like hand, and a miraculous appetite. However, he was a sufficient secretary for Eastlake, whose correspondence had no complexities, and the majority of whose letters came from people who knew he was wealthy, and wanted to get money out of him.

The begging-letter-writer has a recognized vocation in this country. I wonder he does not call himself a *solicitor*. A man has only to be supposed rich—only to build a church, provide dwellings for the poor, win a Derby, start a racing-yacht, and he will have hordes of these fellows after him. Eastlake's secretary hadn't much sense, but he had sense enough to burn all letters of this character. It may be convenient to mention that his name was Haynes.

Presently entered the two young ladies. Clara Eastlake was a nice plump little person, with the very best of tempers—in fact, her father's own daughter. You would not suspect her of much character, but doubtless she would make an excellent wife (especially being an heiress) to any man who falls into the current belief that characterless women are the best. It is an excellent creed for men who have not much character themselves.

But Clara's companion was quite another kind of creature. She was perfect in form, like a Greek statue. She had the wondrous lines of brow and nose, of bust and waist, that men see in the old marble, and wonder if there ever were such women. Ay, and even now there are such women. Earine was one.

For Miss Eastlake's companion was Earine. How her sea-blue eyes opened as she looked upon Valentine Vivian, her hero of the *Ægean*! Vivian, for his part, was even more amazed; he thought her safe at Rouen, learning the politest French; he had heard Eastlake mention "Miss Delisle," but it had aroused no suspicion in his mind, seeing that the name is one of uncommon commonness.

But now Earine entered the room, dressed (goddesses of Paris fashions help me!) in the precise style of the precise moment. Earine, a trio of years older than when he saw her first, when she wore nothing save the scanty crocus vest—scanty, yet sufficient apparel for a Greek island.

Earine, though taken by surprise, was of course less surprised than Vivian—she knew him to be in England, so that there was a possibility of her meeting him. But Vivian, after his first sudden start of amazement, carried the matter with his customary coolness.

"Glad to see you looking so well, Miss Delisle," he said. "I have met Miss Delisle before, Eastlake."

"Old friends, eh?" said that amiable individual. "I am very glad. We shall get on together all the better. Come, let us have breakfast."

So they sat down to the most artistic matutinal meal which Polly could produce, and got into gossiping conversation over it.

"So you have met Miss Delisle before, Vivian," said Eastlake. "What a very curious coincidence!"

"Very," replied Vivian.

"Two coincidences together, in fact," continued Eastlake, "meeting me and meeting Miss Delisle. Very remarkable, I call it. Let me give you some lobster salad."

As they chatted over the breakfast-table, Earine looked on in a state of strange silence; and even Miss Eastlake, with a dim instinctive perception that there was something inexplicable in the air, ate rather less than usual. That is to say, she could not contrive to eat more than a couple of kidneys, half a haddock, the tail and major claw of a lobster, a couple of eggs, and two or three slices of Canterbury brawn. Her affectionate papa noticed the smallness of her appetite, and asked if she did not feel well.

"Let's have a smoke," said Eastlake, when breakfast was over, "and just a drop of brandy-and-soda to freshen the palate. What are you going to do with yourself, Vivian?"

"To-day, do you mean?"

"To-day, and for several days. I'm not going to let you run away from me, now that we have met in this romantic way. I intended to stay here a day or two: but won't you drive on with me and see my place? I wish you would stop for a month, or a year if you like."

"My dear Eastlake—" began Vivian.

"Call me Jack," he said.

"Well, Jack, my dear boy, I'll stay with you here, and I'll drive with you to your own place. But I am a confounded restless fellow, and you must forgive me if I should suddenly find it necessary to leave you. Take me as I am, old fellow, and don't quarrel with me if I inadvertently offend you—that's all I ask."

"Quarrel with you!" ejaculated Eastlake. "Why, I never quarrelled with any body in the whole course of my life, and it isn't likely I shall begin by quarrelling with you."

"Upon my honor," replied Vivian, "I don't think it is."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## EARINE.

"White and sweet, white and sweet,  
Is the hawthorn bloom round the cushat's nest:  
White and sweet are my true love's feet,  
And the song of spring's in her fragrant breast."

WHEN Vivian escaped from his friend Eastlake, and found himself alone, he began to wonder how the deuce Earine came into the position wherein he found her. He had left her to be educated at Rouen; and now he had sent Mark Walsh to look after her; but here she was, unexpectedly, in England, acting as companion to the rather silly daughter of a very good fellow, who was an unquestionable muff. However, Vivian was a cool hand, and knew that most things have a tendency to explain themselves, and was well accustomed to a waiting game: so he was singularly patient until it should please Earine to tell him how it was that he met her in such a place and under such circumstances.

The time soon came. Earine herself—but I must let her tell her story as she told it to Vivian; at any rate, she managed to get hold of him very soon after breakfast, in a long room of the old hostelry which had once been an assembly room. He, in a wandering humor, was investigating the premises; she (by instinct, doubtless) knew where he was, and rushed into his arms. He kissed her red ripe lips and tremulous eyelids, and then, putting her at arm's length with a humorous smile, said—

"Well, child, so you have run away from school?"

Earine. "Shall I tell you all? Are you what you were on the island two years ago? Can you be patient? Do you love?"

Vivian. "Foolish child! I thought you knew me by this time. Tell your story and I will listen."

Earine. "It was very cruel to put me in that place, you know. But I have read books, and I have thought, and I see that both men and women are cruel. Men are cruel from thoughtlessness or selfishness: women are cruel because they love cruelty. The women there were cruel to me; they humiliated me with menial offices; they even used the scourge. I am your slave; I submitted, since it was you who placed me there. I should have remained till now, and endured every thing, but the convent was suddenly closed. Something was wrong—some wickedness had been done; every one was to go home. I could not send to you, for I did not know where; I was to wait, you remember, till Mark came for me. There was a young English lady there who was a great friend of mine; she asked me to come with her, and I was glad to accept. Her father is a great friend of Mr. Eastlake's, and knew that he wanted a companion for his daughter. That is how you find me here."

Vivian. "Thank all the gods of Olympus for this, and especially Aphrodite. To her will

I presently offer libations of the best wine to be found here. But now tell me, Earine, do you like England best, or Greece? And what am I to do with you?"

*Earine.* "I love you. I am your slave. I am happy where you are, yet I delight in winds that are softer, and waves that are always bright and calm."

*Vivian.* "Did you expect to meet me again?"

*Earine.* "I knew I must. I knew that Aphrodite would not suffer me to break my heart with disappointment. I have been very, very unhappy with that good Mr. Eastlake and his dear dumping of a daughter, who have always been so very, very kind to me. But ah, Vivian, I have always loved you—and I knew I should meet you again—and now, thanks to Apollo, we are once more together. I am older now, Vivian. I know what it is: I know I love you. Perhaps you don't love me. Never mind. I am your slave, and will do what you please."

*Vivian.* "Ah, I should like to be back upon our island."

*Earine.* "Without those horrid men."

*Vivian.* "Those horrid men were very useful, child. They brought us wine and fruit and tobacco; they brought you, foolish little girl! What says Sappho?"

"Hesperus, rise in the East with beauty abundantly laden!

Wine and the kid dost thou bring. Thou bringst to the mother the maiden."

They were as generous to me as Hesperus once to your mother."

*Earine.* "I would rather not see them any more."

*Vivian.* "Probably you never will. And what have you been reading since I saw you?"

*Earine.* "Look. Here is the dear little volume you told me always to keep."

She took from her bosom a small book bound in Russia leather. It was the "Odyssey"—a copy printed in Padua two centuries ago.

*Vivian.* "So you have not forgotten Homeros. I am glad of that."

*Earine.* "It is the only book of all you gave me. The women at the convent said they were all wicked books. The first few days they were very kind to me; the Prioress was away, and it was a sort of holiday. When she came back she sent for me, and asked me to tell her all about myself. So I told her of my life on the island with you—ah, what a happy life it was!—and she was dreadfully shocked, and said you were awfully wicked."

*Vivian.* "Faith, the old lady had some penetration."

*Earine.* "Oh, she wasn't at all old—only two or three and twenty; but she came of some noble family that were great benefactors to the convent."

*Vivian.* "Aye, girls are always the worse tyrants. So she took your books away?"

*Earine.* "Yes; she had them all brought—and the very first she saw was 'Don Juan.'"

Oh, you should have seen her rage. She was going to throw it on the fire, when I sprang at her and tore it out of her hands. This was a fearful offense. She sent for two of the sisters—I fought like a panther, but they were too strong for me—and my poor shoulders were lacerated with a whip of knotted cords."

*Vivian.* "The brutes!"

*Earine.* "Oh, the Prioress was very fond of this amusement, and never spared any body. There was one poor nun who had been in the convent twenty years, and was second in authority before the Prioress came. It seems she expected to have been made Prioress. I suppose the other knew this, for she took a dislike to her, and put her in the very lowest rank, and found some reason for punishing her almost every day. Poor thing, she used to go about the place crying like a great baby."

*Vivian.* "I don't wonder at that; so did you, I suppose."

*Earine.* "No, indeed. They could not make me cry, with all their cruelty. The Prioress was very angry, and declared I was possessed with a devil."

*Vivian.* "It must have been a nice establishment. Yet I heard it highly recommended, and I know some English girls of good family were sent there."

*Earine.* "Oh yes, there were several. But they told me it was not so bad until the new Prioress came. Still, they were always very strict and severe. Nobody could complain, you know, because all letters that came or went were read by the Prioress."

*Vivian.* "Was there no way of sending a letter secretly?"

*Earine.* "Miss Adams, my great friend, you know, resolved to try. There was a servant called Lisette, who used to be very kind and obliging to Miss Adams and me. We both thought she could be trusted; so Emily wrote a letter to her papa, and gave Lisette some gold to post it. The little hypocrite took it straight to the Prioress."

*Vivian.* "Who scolded you, I suppose."

*Earine.* "Scolded, no! It was seldom she took the trouble to scold. No, she had the discipline administered rather more sharply than usual; and poor Emily, who is not so hard as I am, couldn't help screaming. I was very sorry for that."

*Vivian.* "I don't think you could blame her much."

*Earine.* "I suppose not. She said it was the shame she cared about, and not the pain. I think it was much greater shame to the Prioress and her assistants than to us, who were forced to submit. But Emily declared I couldn't understand it, because my education had been neglected."

*Vivian.* "You seem to have borne your persecution philosophically."

*Earine.* "I despised that cruel woman. I would not let her have any power over me. The English girls used always to make a fuss and

scream, and kneel down and beg to be forgiven this time—and I know she liked to see it. But after the first, when I saw resistance was no good, I used to clench my teeth and my hands, and let them do just what they liked to me. I wouldn't kneel to that infamous creature. And that poor Emily, who slept in the next bed to mine, would lie half the night after punishment moaning and sobbing and praying. What was the use of it?"

*Vivian.* "Not much, certainly. I wonder some of the girls didn't try to run away."

*Earine.* "I thought of that, and I am sure I could have done it; but I determined to stay where you placed me. I knew it must end some day."

*Vivian.* "And how did it end?"

*Earine.* "I don't know what had been done, but the police came to the convent. We had the satisfaction of seeing the Prioress and several other nuns handcuffed and marched away; but we never heard what became of them. In a few days the parents of the girls came or sent for them, and Emily's father took compassion on me."

*Vivian.* "Well, I hope the Prioress was served as she served you; but I suppose there is no chance of that. If she were not in the clutches of the police I should send Mark Walsh to avenge you. What should we do with her, if we had her on our island?"

*Earine.* "Don't talk of it. I have no wish for revenge. I only hope never to know any thing more of her."

This colloquy, as I have said, took place in the old dusty assembly-room, where, in forgotten days, the magnates of the county had dined, and the belles of the county had danced. Vivian smoked, and walked up and down, while Earine told her story with pleasant vivacity. At this point Jack Eastlake's voice was heard.

"Come, Vivian—come, Miss Delisle—it is a charming day; won't you walk or drive before luncheon?"

"Are you going to have your team out?"

"I think so; they ought to have a little exercise."

"Then I'll go with you, and admire your skill as a whip. Is there a post-office anywhere near? I want to send a letter."

"The nearest is Ashdown village," said the landlord; "about five miles down the road, and then about a mile farther along a turning to the right."

"I know it," said Eastlake. "We'll drive there. Pinnell, make some claret-cup while I look after the prads. The ice is in the hind boot."

Vivian's letter was soon written. It was to Mark Walsh, at a post-office in Eastern London, and ran thus:

"If you have returned, come here at once. Earine is safe."

So they drove to Ashdown, posted the letter, and were back in fifty-five minutes without the team's turning a hair.

## CHAPTER XIV

## AT BIRKLANDS.

"Earine has sucked the breath of spring—  
And I have touched thy lips, Earine."

NEXT day the party proceeded to Birklands, Eastlake's inheritance—a handsome modern mansion in a well-timbered park, with gardens and conservatories kept in excellent order. Here Vivian promised his hospitable friend to stay as long as he could manage to be tranquil. And he now told Eastlake certain portions of Earine's story, and arranged with him that she should still be his daughter's companion.

"You see, Jack," he said, "being a bachelor without an establishment, I can do nothing with her—and my cousin Lady Eva Redfern might think her a bore—whereas you and your daughter seem to like her. There need not be any difference made because I pay her expenses instead of you."

"All right," replied Eastlake. "Have it your own way. I shall be glad to keep her till she gets tired of us. But she's a deuced fine girl, and you'll have her wanting to marry somebody soon."

"I shall leave you to play papa, and see that she doesn't elope."

To Earine herself he said for the present nothing as to the arrangement, but allowed matters to go on just as hitherto. In the course of a few days Mark Walsh arrived, sent on from the *Peacock*. Vivian gave him private audience.

"You've found the young lady, sir, which is lucky; and I suppose she has told you the convent was broken up."

"Yes; what was the cause?"

"The head of the convent turned out to be an impostor," said Mark. "The right person was a young lady belonging to a very high family—I forget the name. She was rather weak-minded, so I suppose she was to have this place just as an English squire puts his stupidest son into the Church. She started from her father's castle to come to Rouen, with no companion except her maid, who had been with her some years, and the maid's lover, who was a groom in her father's service. He was to see them safely to Rouen, and return home again. Now the servant-girl had obtained so much influence over this silly young lady that she was quite afraid of her; and at a place on the way where they spent the night the maid and mistress changed clothes and changed places, and this servant-girl actually took possession of the chief place in the convent."

"She must have been a clever creature," said Vivian.

"Uncommonly clever, they tell me. Nobody found her out. The poor young lady acted as her servant, and did not attempt to betray her. She was a terrible tyrant, and used to be very cruel to all the nuns and the young ladies in the convent-school; it was the natural spite, I suppose, sir, of a woman who had always

been a servant and now found herself set above her betters. I am afraid Miss Earine was badly treated there."

"How was she found out at last?" inquired Vivian.

"Through her lover. She sent him money to keep him quiet, but he got drunk pretty often, and said things which made his master suspicious. So the old gentleman went off to Rouen to see his daughter, and the whole affair was soon found out. The young woman very nearly slipped off, I heard, but they caught her just in time, and the Rouen police had orders to send her straight to Paris, to the Prison Mazas."

"I am afraid she won't get treatment as severe as she seems to have inflicted on others," said Vivian. "Mere imprisonment is too good for her."

"Ah, you don't know those French prisons, sir. France isn't like England, where the thieves get good living and easy work, and pious books to read. They do things there in a very independent way, and nobody ever asks any questions. I expect that young woman would be uncommonly glad to get nothing worse than what she used to give other people."

"Well, I am glad to hear it, Mark. Now, do you think you can safely go to Riverdale, and find out how matters are there? I don't want you to run any risk."

"It is quite safe, sir. I should very much like to hear how poor old Boss got over his difficulties."

Mark started on his second tour of investigation, and Vivian remained at Birklands. He was not eager to move. Life was easy enough with Eastlake and his daughter, who cared for little beyond eating, drinking, and sleeping. But what kept him at Birklands was the presence of Earine. She brought back to him the halcyon days of the Ægean, before the arrow of Apollo had touched his brain with fire. It was a delight to him to make her read Homer, in a voice as mellow as gold—to watch her blue eyes brighten whenever he looked at her—to see her, stately and slender as Nausikaa, pass swiftly over the lawns. Poor Clara Eastlake by her side looked like a sedate donkey beside a deer of the Exmoor.

Eastlake and his daughter were of lazy mould, and usually breakfasted at eleven. Vivian loved the early morning, when multitudinous dew-drops sprinkle grass and leafage, and the flowers have their freshest fragrance, and the rejoicing birds their most delicious song. He liked a dip in the river just after dawn, when the water is still icy-cool. And to Earine it was delight ineffable to be permitted to meet him on the terrace long ere any other creature was moving, and find in the first vision of the day something fairer than all the visions of night.

One divine morning Earine was on the terrace at six, in obedience to Vivian's command. Soon she saw him coming up from the river, freshened by his dip. She ran forward and kiss-

ed his hand. She was just as tall as Vivian, and her very playfulness was stately.

Vivian. "Your young eyes are dream-haunted, Earine. You are come straight from Dreamland. Whom did you meet there?"

Earine. "You, you, only you."

Vivian. "There is an old legend about a maiden

"Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers."

If some sorcerer made you out of flowers, he found your figure in the lily of the Nile, and the color of your breast and the fragrance of your breath in the gardenia blossom. As for your eyes, I don't believe he made them of flowers: they are two spoonfuls of sapphire seawater. After all, perhaps you were made of sea-foam, and nothing else—like Aphrodite. But you are a confoundedly pretty girl, Earine, and I think Jack Eastlake is in love with you."

Earine. "Then I must go away from here."

Vivian. "You must do no such thing. Wouldn't you like to be Mrs. Eastlake, and have that good fat Clara for a daughter?"

Earine. "Why do you ask such teasing questions?"

Vivian. "Well, I will be serious. Listen. You love me, I know. You would like to go back to the island with me. And I am beginning to think I love you, child. But you know I am mad sometimes, and I am afraid of what I may do in my madness. I might kill you, perhaps."

Earine. "Oh, I am not afraid. You love me. You said you loved me. Love will cure you."

Vivian. "I wish I were sure of it. I am going to try myself, Earine. If I can get back my old clearness of mind, then you know what will happen. If not, it would be cruel of me to marry you."

Earine. "No, no, no, it would not be cruel. Don't go away. I can cure you—I know I can. You may kill me if you will."

Vivian. "I am going away to-day, my child, but you shall soon see me again. And you are to write me little notes in Greek, and tell me all about yourself and your drives every month; and what adventures you meet at the Peacock, and whether Mr. Eastlake has proposed. Do you understand?"

Earine. "I will obey. If you sent me back to that cruel convent, I should go. But I wish you would let me follow you as your page. I don't want you to leave me."

Vivian. "You are a foolish loving little girl. But you are older now, and wiser, are you not? than when Mark Walsh brought you to me in your crocus chitonion. And if you will reflect a little, you will see that I am doing the best thing. But pshaw! why should I reason with you? Women have no reason, only instinct."

Earine. "And my instinct tells me that I can cure you, and that no one else can. But you will not listen, I know. I must submit."

Vivian. "Yes, Petale, you must submit. I

shall start to-day, after luncheon. If all goes well with me, you will soon see me again. So now one kiss from that mouth, ruddy as the cyclamen's, and then I'll go and forage for breakfast. If I wait for Eastlake, I shall starve. Come in, and make me some tea."

That afternoon Vivian started, whispering to the bay mare as he mounted that they had a long journey to go. The beautiful creature replied with an intelligent whinny. Eastlake was heartily sorry to lose his old school-fellow, and extorted a promise of early return. Even the dumpy Clara was affected; to her Vivian was a brilliant vision such as had never before crossed her narrow horizon.

Vivian slept one night on the road. The following afternoon, just as Lady Eva's ponies were waiting for her at the door of Broadoak Avon, he rode leisurely up the avenue.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MADAME DE PETIGNY GARNUCHOT.

"On appelle ces gens, à la ville, des monchards; à l'armée, des espions; à la cour, des agens secrets; aux champs, ils n'ont point de nom encore, n'étant connus que depuis peu. Ils s'étendent, se répandent à mesure que la morale publique s'organise."

LADY EVA was very glad to see her cousin. She came down the steps accompanied by a lady—foreign, evidently, and evidently *espionne*—whom she introduced as Madame de Petigny Garnuchot. Madame had black sparkling eyes and a small nervous hand; she wore deep mourning.

"I am so pleased that you have come back at last, Val," said Lady Eva. "Rupert is gone to Riverdale. There is a French gentleman staying with us, a friend of Rupert's, M. Achille Catelan. You will find him in the library. I shall soon be back."

Of course Vivian knew Achille Catelan by name. Catelan is a poet, a feuilletonist, and a Red Republican. And yet a friend of that Tory of the highest school, Squire Redfern! Yes, for they had one thing in common. The Squire thought the hereditary aristocracy should govern; the democrat thought that power belonged to the populace, and that the populace should choose poets like himself to lead them; but they both hated and despised one Louis Napoleon.

The two new-comers at Broadoak Avon greatly enlivened the evenings. M. Catelan was a man of fifty, tall, slender, gray, somewhat haughty in his bearing; a man, clearly, who could use pen and rapier with equal facility. Catelan's conversation was delightful. He knew every thing and every body in that beautiful and fearful Paris which is such an enigma to Englishmen. He had a light liking for the Bourbons, and was, indeed, on friendly terms with one or two of the Orleans Princes; but France as a republic was his dream, and that dream made him an exile.

Vivian tried to reason with him on this point, but it is so difficult to see what lies nearest home. Vivian's theory about France was that it should be the scene of a brilliant monarchy, a splendid court, a chivalrous aristocracy; but at the same time general freedom and ample elbow-room for the wits who, from Pascal and Courier down to Prévost-Paradol, have always been freely generated on the soil of France. M. Catelan looked upon this as Utopian; saw no future for France except through democracy.

Madame de Petigny Garnuchot talked little, but usually to the purpose. A clever woman, evidently; but more noticeable than her cleverness was her intense yet quiet earnestness. She was a woman with ideas of her own, which she was resolved to carry out—so at least it appeared to Vivian.

When he got an opportunity of talking quietly to his cousin, he asked her a few questions about her guests. Catelan, as we have seen, was the Squire's friend: Redfern had met him in London, and had induced him to forego conspiracy for a time, and take to the country. Madame Garnuchot, on the other hand, had been invited by Eva herself: how known to Eva did not appear, but she was making a kind of tour from one part of England to the other.

"I think she is so charming," said Lady Eva.

"Can't say I admire her," said Vivian.

"She looks false. But I do like old Catelan, and mean to cultivate his acquaintance."

Catelan, as most men know, was worth cultivating. But Vivian did not find him peculiarly willing to be cultivated. Catelan was a man whom the Emperor Napoleon would gladly have encouraged, would gladly have made into a senator; but Catelan (like the Emperor himself) was an inveterate conspirator. So he soon made Paris a place too hot to hold him; and I dare say the unrivalled police of *Luftia* could have stayed his exit, had it so pleased them; but this will I say for the Emperor (I who have drunk stout from the pewter with him in days *apte-imperial*), that never has he done a harsh deed that was unnecessary.

Vivian did not particularly admire Madame de Petigny Garnuchot, but he had a theory to the effect that if you flirt with a woman you will soon find her out, and so he flirted with this rather mysterious lady. She took to it very kindly. I need hardly say that Vivian performed his part of the business remarkably well; indeed, he so completely fooled Madame, that she began to look forward to a change of name. Meanwhile he had been forming his own conclusions in regard to her. What those conclusions were will presently appear.

Meanwhile let a word or two be said in regard to the condition of Riverdale, from which town Vivian had received a report by Mark Walsh before he ventured to show himself at Broadoak Avon. The town had settled into phlegmatic quietude in reference to the robberies. Boss, the jeweller, had lost his presence



of mind for a moment when he saw the police marching up his cellar stairs, but he regained it very rapidly, according to the habit of the Hebrew, and reflected that if he made no confessions they would find it hard to make a case against him. So he was resolutely reticent. In his first terror he had thought of confessing every thing, and telling what he knew about Vivian; but he thought better of it, and held his tongue, and the police were baffled. There was no case against him. There was strong suspicion, of course, and every body believed all manner of things; but Boss quietly ignored it all, and carried on his business in his usual manner, and flourished as of old. There was, I regret to say, a tory newspaper in the town, which (Boss being an enlightened Liberal, as are all Jews) inflicted upon him certain scurrilous rhymes. He treated that constitutional journal with sublime contempt. He sold his watches and bracelets, and went regularly to his synagogue, and was treated by men of his own class as those are always treated who are known to have a comfortable accumulation of money—howsoever obtained.

Severno was very savage. He knew that Boss was the man, but he could not complete his case. After finding the communication between *The Jolly Cricketers* and the jeweller's cellar, after getting that little bit of additional evidence betrayed by the diamond stud, it was very hard upon Severno to be foiled at last. He sent in his resignation; but the town council had come to their senses, and declined to accept it. Even an English town council occasionally shows some signs of intelligence.

Riverdale and its vicinage were at peace. There were no more burglaries or highway robberies. People slept quietly, and had no fears; farmers rode home from market without any dread of being stopped on the way. Every body was satisfied—except Severno. He was in a state of permanent irritation. He had been baffled utterly, for the first time in his life; and as the scoundrels whom he longed to catch had disappeared altogether from the country-side, he had no chance of avenging himself. It was confoundingly provoking.

One day, the party from Broadoak being in Riverdale, Lady Eva went to Boss's shop for some article of jewelry. Although people began to suspect Boss of being a plusquam-Judaic thief, he did not appear to lose custom; and I think Lady Eva, and most of the other county ladies, knew nothing at all of his recent escapade. Vivian went with his cousin to his shop, and was amused to see the Jew making horrible signs to him, intended doubtless to suggest a private interview. He took no notice at the time of these manifestations; but an hour later, having left Lady Eva at Archdeacon Coningsby's, he strolled round to Boss's. He found the Jew behind the counter.

"Come into my room, Mr. Vivian," he exclaimed, effusively. "I have something choice to show you."

Vivian, smoking a big Partagas, followed him.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Vivian," he said, "but I thought you would be glad to hear about Mark Walsh and the rest of them."

"What the devil do you mean?" asked Vivian.

"The robbers, sir," said the Jew, with tremulous voice. "Those that carried away Miss Ashow, and killed Mr. Severno's horse."

"You are mad, my good fellow," said Vivian, quietly. "I am not in the slightest degree interested in those scoundrels. If you have any thing to show me, show it at once."

"This sort of thing won't do," said Boss. "You fine gentlemen think you can do what you like, and nobody dares touch you. I'm not going to be treated in this way. I'll have money from you, and a good round sum, or I'll give you up to the police."

"You idiotic son of Abraham," said Vivian, "do you see this?" And he pointed at the Jew's curly head a revolver. "I'll blow out the gruel you call your brains if you dare talk nonsense to me. Give me up to the police—I like the impudent idea. You ought to be in their custody, I think. I'm doubtful whether I ought not to hand you over to Severno on your own confession."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Vivian. I'm very sorry. I was quite wrong—don't think of what I said. You see, sir, I have had so much trouble lately, that I am half mad sometimes."

"Very likely," said Vivian. "But now understand, once for all, it's no good to be mad with me. If ever you trouble me with any more of this nonsense, you won't live another week. You know me, and you know that I keep my promises."

And thus delivering himself, Vivian left the shop.

\* \* \* \* \*

Life at Broadoak Avon was for some time very quiet and regular. The Squire went on in his own way, of course—a model country gentleman, who managed his estate to perfection, and was a paragon of magistrates, and solved the great problem of the co-existence of pheasants and foxes. An incarnation of sound sense and high honor was Rupert Redfern—a man who took the straightforward practical constitutional view of all subjects, a man who could not lie and who could not apprehend a new idea. Such men are plentiful in England, and are the givers of its strong slow ox-like greatness. England's genius takes on rare occasions higher forms: Shakspeare and Nelson live in a higher region than Ben Jonson or Samuel Johnson. But your bovine men are of use.

Lady Eva and her French friend seemed greatly to enjoy each other's company. Madame Garnuchot's presence was of great service to Eva, who, for two reasons, had been gradually getting into a morbid and dissatisfied state. She had not that close and intimate sympathy with her husband which a woman of her character requires. A great many husbands and

wives get on very comfortably without any such feeling. The Squire, for example, was a perfect husband, from an ordinary point of view—he surrounded Lady Eva with all possible luxuries, and made her wish the law of his household; but of that intense sympathy, that actual unity which is the marriage of the soul, he had not the faintest conception. Now Eva was just the woman to feel the want of this—to be vaguely conscious of something imperfect in the relation between herself and her husband, and at the same time uncertain whether the fault was his or her own. Thousands of women, wholly commonplace, would have been perfectly happy (in their sense of happiness) if they had occupied Lady Eva's position. But she wanted something more, which Rupert Redfern had not got to give her.

Had she become the mother of children, she would have found a channel for the divine fountain of love and joy which was as yet "a fountain sealed." But this gift also was denied her. It is a situation of peril to a woman when she is thus unable to satisfy the chief longings of her nature. If one could analyze the history of many a sad and shameful breach of the marriage vows, there would usually be found an absolute incapacity for love, on one side or the other. After all the lessons of all the poets, it is amazing how few people have an accurate notion of what love means. *Love is the only great motive-power in this world.* Pseudo-philosophers, who desire to deal mathematically with humanity, should ponder this aphorism of mine.

So, as I have said, Lady Eva was cheered and enlivened by the companionship of Madame de Petigny Garnuchot, who was emphatically *bon camarade*. Madame's liveliness was inexhaustible. Every thing appeared to interest her. Her keen dark eyes noticed every thing, indoors and out; her comments were always appropriate, often witty. She sat like a happy spectator in the stalls of the great theatre of human affairs. Envious temperament! It is the only theatre to which one has a perpetual free admission, and yet how few of us profit by the privilege! There is more real drama in a bee-hive or an ant's nest in an hour than in all the theatres of London right through the season; and thrush and nightingale and lark are far finer minstrels than Tietjens and Goethe; and the hawk that flies at the heronshaw, or the pigeon that tumbles in the sapphire air, is more marvellous to look upon than Blondin on his rope or Leotard on his trapeze.

M. Achille Catelan spent the greater portion of his time in Squire Redfern's library—a great collection, with many rare and recondite volumes in it. Bibliomania had infected some of the Squire's ancestors. M. Catelan was wont to spend long mornings in the library, and, after luncheon, to walk for an hour or so in the grounds, and then to return to his reading. But he wrote and received many letters; and when at breakfast he perused his correspondence,

it was clear from his expressive countenance that it contained matters of intense interest to him.

Vivian, meanwhile, took matters very easily. He was trying hard to get himself into a quiet state of mind. He was afraid of himself. He had brought himself down to a tolerably sober condition; but he was utterly uncertain whether this condition would be permanent. So he staid on at Broadoak Avon, and watched the progress of affairs, and waited to see whether he was getting sane. Still did he ride at irregular nocturnal hours, but he committed no robberies now. His habits were felicitously irregular. Sometimes he was up with the dawn, riding over the free moorland betwixt Broadoak and Riverdale; sometimes he lay in bed till long past luncheon, reading French novels and poetry, and smoking endless cigars. Little correspondence at this time had Vivian. Every day there was a Greek notelet from Earine—a little bit of fresh loving talk, that seemed like a frond of maiden-hair or a bloom of cyclamen. Every day did Vivian grow more and more in love with this simple and beautiful child of the *Ægean*. Alas! every day did he feel more keenly his own unfitness for marriage.

Vivian was rather surprised to find that Madame de Petigny Garnuchot was an early riser. He did not expect it of her. He regarded her as belonging to that large class of Frenchwomen who want a cup of chocolate in bed before they can encounter the duties of the day. Suddenly it flashed upon him that Madame came down just in time to meet the postman—a functionary in whom Vivian had slight interest, since he knew that he should always get his notelet from Earine, and also knew that nobody else knew his address. But he discovered that Madame invariably met the postman, invariably also appeared in the hall just as the letters to be sent out were placed on a slab of white marble. A kind of instinct brought him to the belief that Madame (of whom he had doubts from the first) was simply a clever *mouchard*. He resolved to find her out.

Clearly, if espionage was her duty, Achille Catelan was the person to be watched. The gay wit and caustic irony of his political writings had long ago aroused imperial hatred. He had the art of evoking a despot's detestation with exquisite ease; a master of epigram and allusion, he was more than a match for the master of many legions and much artillery. The world, you see, has its compensations. And M. Catelan, as I have said, was also a conspirator. The enemies of Cæsarism, in all countries, were his intimate friends. He was in constant correspondence with them all, and knew their plans, and was their confidential counsellor.

Vivian made up his mind that Madame was under orders to act as a spy upon Catelan. He drew the Frenchman into conversation about her, but there was no suspicion in his mind. So he resolved to try an experiment. Mark Walsh was still at hand, not at Riverdale, but

in a neighboring village; Vivian summoned him to his assistance.

So it happened that one afternoon, as Madame de Petigny Garnuchot was walking in the grounds, she was accosted by a laboring man, who said—

"Asking your pardon, miss, can you tell me where to take this letter?"

And he took from his pocket a large red cotton handkerchief, which, being unrolled, there appeared a brown paper parcel. This again being carefully unwrapped, he produced a letter addressed to M. Achille Catelan.

Madame Garnuchot jumped at this, with a greediness in her eyes.

"I know the person to whom it is addressed," she said. "I will give it him."

"Asking your pardon, miss, I was ordered to give it into the gentleman's own hands."

"He is not at home now," said Madame, lying fearlessly. "I will take care that he has it the moment he returns."

And she gave the messenger half a crown, to silence his objections.

"Now," she said to herself, almost aloud, walking rapidly along a turf terrace towards a retired part of the gardens, "now I hope I have caught him."

There was an arbor at the end of this terrace. Madame sat down therein, somewhat out of breath. After a moment's pause, she opened the letter, wholly unaware that Vivian was watching her.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE POSTMAN ARRIVES.

"How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!"

VIVIAN saw Madame de Petigny Garnuchot open this letter addressed to Achille Catelan, saw her read it with eager eyes, watched her as she walked rapidly back to the house. It was an absurd bit of composition, of his own doing. It informed Catelan of an immediate outbreak which was to occur at Paris, and invited him to come over in good time to take part in the arrangements, mentioning in a mysterious fashion men whom he was to meet, and where he was to meet them. Some he was to see in London, some in Paris. The *vraisemblance* of the thing was perfect.

Having intercepted it, the difficulty for her was to pass it on again, seeing that she had interfered with the proper method of delivery. After some deliberation, she concluded that the best plan was to find a rustic messenger, and send it by him.

Those who have lived in the country are well aware that dull rustics are not difficult to find. Madame Garnuchot found one easily enough, and gave him careful direction, not unwatched by Vivian all the while. And of course Vivian, knowing that his letter, if it reached Catelan, would be detected as a hoax, took excellent care to intercept Madame's rustic, and get it

from him by some simple device. The dull rustic got a small sum in silver from both parties, and was thoroughly content, and did nothing but drink drugged beer and smoke bad tobacco for the next two days.

Madame de Petigny Garnuchot, having, with a Frenchwoman's quickness, made mental memoranda of what the intercepted note contained, retired to her own apartment to write. Vivian, who began to find the affair as amusing as hunting an otter or drawing a badger, was resolved to beat her at her own weapons.

As I have said, Madame used generally to be in the hall just as the letters were collected for the postman. Now the manner of dealing with correspondence at Broadoak Avon was this. People sent their letters down into the hall, where they lay upon a marble side-table. When the postman called, a servant collected them and handed them over to him. A careless fashion, but characteristic of Squire Redfern, who always trusted the people about him. My own experience is that, now that every body can read, letters are perpetually tampered with. The sacrosanctity of a letter is not intelligible to people beneath a certain rank of life; men-servants and maid-servants, fed upon penny periodicals, have a romantic inquisitiveness, and love to find out the affairs of their masters and mistresses. Thackeray was never weary of reminding us that all our private affairs, our nice little family quarrels, our unpaid bills, our small secrets of all kinds, are the talk of the servants' hall, and furnish pleasant excitement for that domestic circle.

"Master's had another tiff with missus," says John Thomas.

"Yes, and I know why," says Abigail. "It's all along of young Mr. William. He's got into a lot of debt again, and master swears he won't pay it, and missus has been crying dreadful."

"You know nothing about it," exclaims a pert *fille de chambre*. "I could tell you if I chose. It was all Miss Constance and that Captain Stuart that she's so fond of. She declares she shall die if she mayn't marry him; and her mamma takes her part, and master says he won't have him come near the house."

This is the sort of thing which you might hear if you were in receipt of fernseed, and could walk invisible into your servants' hall. Servants know every thing. You can not expect them to be uninterested in the drama of life which you are acting for their amusement. And, if you leave letters within their reach, depend on it they will be read.

Just before the postman was due that evening, Vivian walked into the hall, smoking a cigar, with his hands in the pockets of his lounging-coat. A lamp stood on the side-table, and beside it was a heap of letters—mostly the Squire's big square missives, directed in a hand that you could read a couple of yards off. There were one or two of Lady Eva's delicate fragrant notes, one or two also of Achille Catelan's, written in the quaintest of hands

upon the thinnest of paper. Vivian was followed by a couple of sharp fox-terriers, which he had lately been training to pursue rats.

There was a footman in the hall.

"Johnson," said Vivian, "just go to my room and see if I left a letter there for the post."

The servant went, and just at the same instant Madame de Petigny Garnuchot came delicately tripping down the great stone staircase, dressed in black, with white lace at her throat and wrists, carrying in her hand a couple of letters. She hesitated a moment when she saw Vivian and his dogs: then she came forward to the table.

"I am just in time for the post," she said, putting down her letters.

"Yes," answered Vivian. "Forgive my cigar, Madame. I have sent Johnson to look for a letter of mine."

"Oh, you know I never care about the smoke of cigars. I like it. I like a little cigarette myself sometimes."

As she spoke she was standing close to the table, and looking eagerly, so Vivian thought, at the addresses of M. Catelan's letters.

"She is a *mouchard*, I'll swear," said Vivian to himself.

Suddenly there was a scamper of feet, a barking of dogs. There was a rat in the hall, and the two terriers were after him at once. Hot foot, helter-skelter, dogs and rat were tumbling over each other. Madame screamed, gathered up her petticoats, ran up the staircase with a display of dainty ankles. As the rat was killed, the postman rang, and Johnson, with Vivian's letter in his hand, opened the hall-door. Vivian gathered up the letters from the table, and handed them to the servant. Some of them, at least. I fear Madame's correspondence found its way to the very coat-pocket which had previously contained the rat that caused the diversion.

Satisfied with his little *ruse*, Vivian went to dress for dinner. He kept Madame Garnuchot's letters, to amuse him when he went to bed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BOYS AND GIRLS.

"I wish that I could run away  
From House and Court and Levée  
Where bearded men appear to-day  
Just Eton boys grown heavy."

It was from Charles Lamb that Praed borrowed this touch of levity. For my own part, I think it is an insult to the Eton boys. If the House of Commons and the saloons of Royalty were filled with men at all like Etonians "grown heavy," it would be a measureless reform. A man who has been gay and joyous and brilliant in his boyhood can by no process subside into the average dunderhead of the day. It is a fact, though, that Beales, M.A., was an

Eton boy, and played female characters in Eton theatricals; and when *that* development is possible, there is no saying what may happen. Praed himself might have lived to balk the ambition of a Smith, and to edit the "Quarterly."

There is no Eton for girls, and ladies' colleges are an abomination; and if a girl is left without education, she probably "cometh up as a flower," and delighteth the hearts of publishers. But it can not be denied that in the present day young women are a very sad sequitur to little girls. One nuisance is that little girls become young women so confoundedly early: a small person of thirteen or so stands on her dignity; and disdains to romp, and thinks herself quite "grown up." If, however, you can find a girl who is girlish—a real child, without any silly notion about being a young lady—she is a very delightful creature: but this state of things is as evanescent as a sunset, and the next time you see her she will probably have become the primmest little prig in the world, with definite theories of her own concerning society and fashion and theology.

All this is due, in a measure, to cheap literature. The penny papers have revolutionized the world. They educate us all, whether we like it or not. They teach the veriest infant that their father and mother are fallible creatures, by no means to be revered. Indeed the whole duty of man in these times may be described as reverence to himself, and irreverence to every body else. "Know thyself" is an absurd old maxim: the thing can't be done: why try? Believe in thyself, oh man, and on no account believe in any body else.

Vivian took Madame Garnuchot's letters to his room in the evening, and read them at his leisure. One was addressed to an official person at Paris whose name was well known to him as connected with imperial espionage; the other was to a crony of the writer's at Rouen, and was full of *argot* only readable by a person singularly well acquainted with French society of the Bohemian order. The former of these letters merely repeated, so far as she could understand it, the subject of that epistolary hoax which Madame had intercepted; but the other was a vivid picture of Madame's life at Broad-oak Avon, with keen unflattering portraits of the persons whom she saw, Vivian himself being a prominent figure. It was a piquant piece of gossip, such as none but a very clever Frenchwoman could write; with a vein of vulgarity running through it which Madame never betrayed in conversation.

Its contents surprised Vivian. He read it through twice with considerable interest; then, instead of going to bed as he had intended, he dressed in a riding costume, went down to the stables, saddled his bay mare, and rode off in the moonlight.

His absence was not noticed till the afternoon of the next day, since he very frequently did not appear till dinner-time. He had left a note for Eva, to say that he might be away for

a day or two. Madame de Petigny Garnuchot seemed to take curious interest in his disappearance.

"Monsieur votre cousin is rather eccentric, apparently," she said to Lady Eva.

"He does pretty much as he likes," was the reply. "It is the way with Englishmen who have no particular duties or dependents."

"He is very charming and very clever," said Madame: "What a pity he does not range himself, and marry. He is rich, of course?"

"He is pretty well off, but he is not what we call a marrying man. He likes independence too much."

"Ah, but if all clever and handsome men were like that, what would the ladies do? I think gentlemen like Monsieur Vivian ought to be obliged to marry."

Lady Eva, not entirely agreeing in this view of the matter, replied with a remark on the beauty of the afternoon, and so the subject dropped.

Vivian, as I heretofore said, started for his ride through the moonlight. He travelled for some hours, and soon after daybreak reached the *Peacock* inn. They were early folk at that hostelry, all but the landlord. Old Polly could never sleep beyond five o'clock; and when she was up and stirring, the servant-maids had to be on the move, and the whole huge inn was awake long before ordinary hours.

Hence did it happen that our wayfarer found hostlers ready to take charge of his mare. Having seen her safe, he entered the inn—found his old friend—and was shown to the chamber in which he previously had slept.

"Let me sleep four hours," he said, "and then I'll breakfast."

I regret to say that he did not get a fair four hours' sleep. Was he dreaming or awake? He could not tell; but that terrible old hag in the picture, with wild gray locks and marvellous maddened eyes, stood over him with a dagger in her hand, and he felt its keen point on his breast. He struggled—she was stronger than he dreamt a woman could be—he caught her by the throat at length, and she gave one wild scream, and fell back upon the floor with a frightful crash.

Vivian was awake now, at any rate. Broad daylight poured through the windows. He still felt the dagger of his dream; and, looking down at his breast, he saw a slight stain of blood on his shirt. This was accounted for by a wound, scarcely more than skin deep, in his breast. He looked round for the weapon. It lay on the floor by his bedside—a very unromantic article—a common clasp-knife.

"Well," he reflected, "if I was a respectable old female ghost, and wanted to assassinate a fellow I didn't know, I'd certainly use a more elegant weapon."

What was he to conclude about this curious incident? He came to a rapid and distinct conclusion. It was simply this: that his brain

had not yet regained its balance, and that he had been doing a little somnambulism. As to the clasp-knife, it might easily have been left in the room by some rustic employed on the premises.

Thus having decided, Vivian tried to find in his bath the refreshment which he had not obtained from sleep. Ah, but there is nothing like sleep. I am *φίλμνος, φίλμνος*. Who loves song, loves sleep. And sleep I love because it seems to me like a fragment of the unknown future. It brings me a cup of the water of eternity. I drink Lethe. All the fret and fever of the world—all the biting arrows of mine enemies, and the interminable dreariness of my friends—what are they to me . . . who sleep? "It wraps a man round like a cloak," quoth Sancho Panza. Aye, a cloak invulnerable to all poisonous javelins which our fates and foes and friends jaculate at us. Give me, as Sir Philip Sydney wished,

"A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light,"

and I will utterly forget the troubles of the garish day, and sink into dreamless slumber, as I hope in time to sink into that sweeter sounder sleep which we call death. Then write upon my headstone—

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

Aye, but the morning! Open the window! Comes through the casement the fresh breath of dawn—and therewith the song of joyous birds, the delicious fragrance of flowers, the unutterable delight of the young day. This is the new world; this is Morning Land; this is a region untrodden hitherto by mortal foot. Every day the world is created anew. The man who does not know this is a mere dolt.

Yes, every day there is a new world. And if this be so, as it certainly is, every day of our experience—if the sleep that comes to us with every revolution of the planet whereon we dwell brings a new heaven and a new earth on our own awakening—how will it be with that greater, longer sleep which terminates (so far as we know) our dwelling on this planet? What will the new morning be after that deep, dreamless sleep? What manner of birds will sing, and flowers breathe odor, and light fall upon the scene in the new world thus entered? They will transcend all our earthly experience. If it be delicious to welcome the summer morning after our ordinary sleep, how infinitely delicious will it be to encounter the unknown, unguessable morning whereto we shall awaken from the sleep which men call death! I often wonder that men are not eager to sink into that sleep, that they may wake to the light of a loftier dawn.

Vivian came down to breakfast; had a chat with Pinnell; learnt that Eastlake was at home, and started for Birklands. He arrived at that pleasant mansion early in the summer afternoon. There was a misty light mingled with the sunshine, and the great elms in the Park hid their leafy summits in the veil of vapor.

As he rode towards the house, he perceived that something was going on: round by the stables a line of carriages was drawn up, their shafts turning skywards; and on the lawn he saw many gay groups of children, with comparatively few grown-up folk among them.

"Jack's got a child's party," thought Vivian. "Dear old boy! He's an elderly child himself."

Leaving his mare in good hands, he walked forward to the lawn. It was a joyous scene. Multitudinous young folk of both sexes were taking pleasure in various ways: in one place was cricket, and in another croquet; there was a velocipede race along a gravel walk; there were little people flying into the air in swings; there was a man busily engaged in filling balloons, which rose one after the other into the quiet ether; a Punch and Judy show was amusing a changeable crowd; boats were moving on the pond which Jack called his lake; a series of donkeys were doing their utmost to upset their riders; and the music of a German band was torturing the air. Vivian looked on delightedly, and reflected on the odious necessity that boys and girls should grow into men and women. Not being in any haste to find his friends, he established himself on a rustic seat, and lighted a cigar and enjoyed the spectacle. The soft south wind, laden with a myriad odors from the summer gardens, passed gayly by him, and tossed about the tresses and draperies of the merry maidens on the lawn.

Suddenly the games were suspended, the cricketers threw down their bats, and the croqueters their mallets; Punch and Judy beheld their audience rapidly disappearing in the distance, and made remarks each to the other on the neglect of the classic drama; the donkeys lost their riders, and went off to browse on Jack Eastlake's flower-beds; and there was a rapid skedaddle of small legs all in one direction. Looking that way, Vivian beheld a tent—and the meaning of the movement flashed upon him.

"Eating and drinking," he soliloquized. "Those are real solid sterling pleasures, compatible with innocence. Once I loved jam tarts and ginger-beer; now I care very little indeed for red deer venison and Clos Vougeot. Deer's flesh is easy to digest, and good Burgundy goes straight to the blood, and so I like them. But I think a world in which eating and drinking were not necessary would be an agreeable improvement on this present planet."

Having delivered himself of this sublime reflection, Vivian strolled in a leisurely fashion towards the tent, and looked quietly through one of its entries.

At the head of a long table was Jack Eastlake, "as jolly as a sandboy," slashing away mercilessly at a cold baron of beef. Clara and Karine sat on each side of him, and to Vivian it appeared that the beautiful child of Greece looked a trifle melancholy amid the mirth. Footmen were busy in attending to the wants of the young people—of ages varying from six to six-

teen—who filled the table. Cold duck, fowl, lamb, the pies of Perigord, cool cucumbers, huge salads of lobster, crowded the board; ample confectionery was there, and ices beyond counting; aye, and a limited supply for the seniors of pale ale and claret-cup.

"The old buffer is confoundedly stingy with his beer," remarked Sir Charles Heyford, a baronet of fourteen, whose father died in his babyhood, and whose mother, being a lady of fashion, had left him to study beer and tobacco, horses and dogs, in the stables of Heyford Manor. The boy had not neglected the curriculum, and could drink, smoke, ride, shoot, and swear against any groom or gamekeeper in the country. Yet there was the making of a fine fellow in him.

Vivian, having had a long ride, was rather peckish; so he glided into a seat at the very bottom of the table, and contrived to get some cold meat and beer. His next neighbor, a little girl nine or ten years of age, began to chatter to him as soon as he sat down. She was a child with a marvellous thick mass of that red hair which delights painters, and which other human beings abhor—a weird child, rather. She began by asking Vivian who he was, and where he came from: he promptly replied that he was the Old Man of the Sea, and had come to stretch his legs after his long ride on Sindbad the Sailor's shoulders.

"But the Old Man of the Sea ought to have gray hair," was the response.

"No: it's only old men of the land that do that. There's a great difference, you know. Maidens who live on land have legs, but mermaids have tails."

"Yes, I saw a mermaid once. It was in Wales, on the sea, by moonlight. We were in a boat, and saw her quite clearly, sitting on a rock, and heard her sing, so strangely. As we got near her, she glided into the water."

"Ah," said Vivian, encouraging the superstitious little girl to talk as she pleased, "you should hear the sirens sing. They beat all your mermaids."

"I've read about them," she replied gravely. "I thought if you heard them you could never get away, and they put you to death in some dreadful manner. Have you heard them?"

"Oh yes," said Vivian, "several times."

"Then how did you get away?"

"I don't care so much about music as some people."

From this topic the conversation between Vivian and his young friend strayed to others of kindred nature. She seemed to have no mental food except of this romantic sort. She was credulous of all preternatural fictions. She believed in ghosts and fairies, in gnomes and doppelgangers, in Undine and Peter Schlemihl. Vivian found her an amusing companion at luncheon, but could not help wondering where and how she got her education.

Even where children are the guests, a cold collation can not last forever; exhaustion of

appetite arrived at length, and the young folk streamed out of the tent towards various parts of the lawn, as eager to resume their sports as if digestion were a thing unnecessary. But Vivian's new acquaintance kept close to him; she had found a listener to her tales of wonder, and was determined not to lose him. So she chattered away unweariedly, while they sauntered together in the shadiest part of the lawns and gardens. Vivian was in no hurry to talk to Jack Eastlake; preferred indeed to let that hospitable creature enjoy the humors of the day with no interruption. And the young ladies, he thought, had plenty to do in entertaining the children. So he strolled about, and listened to his little friend's prattle.

As they wandered through a kind of shrubbery which bounded the lawn, they became aware of a tall gentleman, gray-haired though in the prime of life, who sat on a stile which led towards some pleasant park land. His back was turned towards them. The red-haired little girl exclaimed:

"There's papa!"

Then running forward to him, she cried out: "Oh papa, papa, here is such a nice gentleman! He knows all about mermaids and fairies, and says he's the Old Man of the Sea."

With this queer introduction, Vivian found himself face to face with Captain Lester. After a laugh at the oddity of the affair, they easily entered into conversation.

"My little Psyche," said Captain Lester, "reads nothing but romantic nonsense, and believes all that she reads. I have been abroad since her mother died, which was eight years ago, and Psyche has lived with a maiden sister of mine, who has taught her nothing but fairy-tales."

"Eastlake seems to be holding quite a children's festival," remarked Vivian.

"Yes, it is just the thing in which he most delights. I like to look at it myself, but not too near."

"You are staying here, I suppose."

"I came for a day or two, but Eastlake is so hospitable that it is hard work for me to get away. Luckily I am an idle man just now, and these are pleasant quarters. But I can't settle down for long—I am too restless."

"You have travelled a good deal?"

"Travelled and fought. Served in India in my youth, but sold out and came home when my governor died. Then I married: my wife lived only two years after Psyche was born. I could not stay at home, so left the child with my sister, and started to see a little adventure. Saw a good deal, as it turned out, with Garibaldi. When there was no fighting to be done, I took to wandering, and have been pretty nearly everywhere. After a few years of such a life, it is impossible to settle down quietly."

"Difficult perhaps," replied Vivian; "but hardly impossible. You had much better marry again."

"I have thought of that," said Captain Les-

ter; "but the more I consider it, the less I like it. You see, I am getting too old. I have seen exactly the sort of woman I should wish to marry, but I haven't the face to offer her such a battered gray-haired wanderer. No, it won't do."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EARINE'S LOVER.

"Sir Rupert. What did the fellow call me?"

What? An old foggy?

Andrew.

Yes, Sir Rupert.

Sir Rupert.

Ha!

He shall feel the thrust of an old foggy's rapier."

Old Play.

EASTLAKE, I need not say, was delighted to welcome Vivian. And how great was Earine's delight! The child, as Vivian had fancied, looked somewhat melancholy as she sat in the tent; but her beautiful countenance lighted up with perfect joy when she recognized her old protector—her master, as she loved to call him and to think of him.

It was late in the summer evening when Eastlake's young guests dispersed, and the party staying at Birklands finished the day with a mirthful meal, which was neither dinner nor supper, but a mixture of both. Hence Vivian had no opportunity of talking to Earine until the next morning.

"You are not looking well, Earine," were his first words.

"How can I be well when I am away from you? Why may we not be together? I should be well then, and you would soon be happier than you are now."

"Don't preach to me, that's a good girl. You must be patient."

"I try to be patient," she said, "but it is very hard. Your good friend Mr. Eastlake is always telling me I ought to marry, and recommending different people whom he knows. And then there is Captain Lester. I know, by the way he looks and talks, that he will be asking me, one of these days—and it is such a trouble to me."

"Oh, is that what keeps Lester here?" said Vivian, laughing. "Well, he seems a very nice fellow. Don't you like him?"

"I should like him very well if he would let me alone," said Earine, indignantly.

"But you know, my dear little girl," said Vivian seriously, "why I dread the thought of marriage. You know I can not trust myself. You know that since that terrible day when I was suddenly struck down I have not been my own master—I have been incapable of governing myself. It would be a folly, Earine—it would be a crime—for me to run the risk of marriage."

"You say you are not your own master. Perhaps not, but you are mine. If you would only let me do my duty to you! I don't ask you to marry me, but let me live with you and serve you. When your trouble comes upon you,

then I could help you. I am sure that I could cure you: but I have told you so a thousand times, and what is the use?"

"My dear child, I wish I could believe you. You believe in your own power, I know. But if I were to let you have your way—and if then the madness should seize upon me, and I should do some desperate thing—what a miserable affair it would be. No, Earine, I must try myself somewhat longer. I had a dream on my way here which proves that I have not recovered my health of mind as yet."

And then he told her of his suicidal nightmare at the *Peacock*.

"Ah! if I had been with you," exclaimed the Greek girl—without a blush at the notion, for, you see, young ladies, she was an innocent ignorant child of nature—"you would not have had such a cruel dream."

"Well, Earine, you may be right. But I have not yet made up my mind to the possibility. I am going to test myself . . . then we shall see."

"How will you test yourself?"

"I am hardly certain. I have three or four plans. It is absolutely necessary that I should find myself in a saner state before thinking of marriage. And it is doubtful whether I ought ever to think of marriage."

"Well," said Earine with a long sigh, "you are the master, and I am the slave. Tell me that you hate me, and desire never to see me again, and I will go away into some lonely place and die."

"But I don't hate you, Earine, and you know it perfectly well. I don't ask you to be reasonable—it is too much to ask of any woman—but be kind. Remember how much I have suffered—how much I am suffering now. Think of what I should feel if we were married and had children, and my old madness came upon me."

"Oh, I am very cruel and thoughtless," she exclaimed, "I know I am. But then I love you so very much. I am always unhappy when I am away from you. I believe—I *do truly* believe—my love would cure you. But I won't say any more. Do as you think right—only tell me what you mean to do."

"I will tell you in good time, Earine—when I have decided for myself. Forgive me if I seem hard to you: your love, my child, is the happiest gift I have ever received: without it I should be as wretched as a fiend. Don't let us talk any more of this now. I have something else to say to you."

I am terribly afraid lest the exquisitely decorous young ladies who in these days wear the most charming dresses, without, of course, the remotest idea of fascinating mankind, should think my little Earine a forward, designing minx. She is not, really. Please to remember that she is quite uncivilized; that she was born in the Sporades, and brought up on goat's milk cheese and Greek wine and the "Odyssey;" that before she reached England she knew nothing of *chignons, fichus, paniers, tabliers*, but wore

a scanty crocus chitonion, and tied her marvellous hair in a careless knot at the back of her shapely head. Since Undine got a soul given her, never was creature more innocent than Earine. Vivian was her master; he had given her a soul; he had developed her sensuous life into a spiritual life. Such things are done but rarely. This Greek girl realized again the myth of Pygmalion: a divine statue when Vivian first beheld her, she would have become coarse and gross and sensual like her fellows, but for his influence. He taught her to think. He taught her to fear. He taught her to blush. He taught her to love.

I think, therefore, that for Miss Earine Delisle it would be unfair to erect too high a standard of etiquette. Greece and England differ. I have seen two sturdy fellows staggering under the weight of a single bunch of grapes, hung on a pole, and carrying it from shoulder to shoulder. That was on a Greek island. When grapes in such clusters are brought to Covent Garden from Surrey, then perchance maidens like Earine will be found in the home counties.

"I have something else to say to you," Vivian observed. "You remember that tyrannical Rouen Prioress?"

"I should think I did," said Earine, laughing. "She took good care to make me remember her. Her stripes seem to smart even now."

"Did you see much of her handwriting? Can you recollect it?"

"She was very fond of writing orders and warnings and reprimands. And she wrote a rather curious hand; upright, more like a man's than a woman's. I should know it directly."

"Is this at all like it?" said Vivian, showing her a letter of Madame de Petigny Garnuchot's.

"It is hers," she said, excitedly. "I'm sure of it. What have you found out about her?"

"I think," said Vivian, quietly, "that I have recently had the pleasure of making her acquaintance. She is staying in the same house with me. My Cousin Eva thinks her a charming person."

"But how has she managed it?" asked Earine, eagerly. "Surely she ought to be in prison."

"They manage those things better in France. She is much too clever a woman to be allowed to remain in prison. No, child, I suspect she is a government official, and a stanch servant of the Emperor."

"What do you mean?" asked Earine.

"Why, my child, when your tyrant got into the clutches of the police, the police found that they could make much better use of her than keeping her locked up, with hard work to do, and bread-and-water to eat. So they have sent her to England as a spy; for England is the refuge of men who can not live in their own country, and France has too many such men. One of them is living at Broadoak—and this woman is there as a spy upon him, as these letters prove. How the deuce she managed to get into such quarters is a mystery to me. However,



there she is; and there she may stay for a while, until I get a good opportunity of exposing her. By-the-way, I must send on these letters of hers, else she'll suspect something."

"Upon my word it is wonderful," said Earine. "She was a very clever woman, but this is more subtle than I could have imagined. I should like to see her again."

"Would you like to revenge yourself on her?"

"No. She was brutally cruel, but it was her nature. To have such a nature is punishment enough. No, I have no wish for revenge, but I am curious to see her in her new character."

"You shall see her. I wonder how she would look sitting opposite you at a dinner-table."

"She would be astonished, I think," said Earine. "Do you mean to deal with her soon? If you leave her alone too long, she may perhaps do some serious mischief."

"I don't see how she can," replied Vivian. "The gentleman whom she is employed to watch is beyond the reach of imperial persecution—as safe at Broadoak as if he were in an impenetrable fortress."

"Yes," said Earine; "but if she gets at his correspondence, and if his letters implicate people who are *not* beyond imperial reach?"

"Egad, I never thought of that. It might have awkward results. I must give Catelan warning."

"Will you write to him?"

"It would not be safe. No, I must go back to Broadoak and talk to him. I have said nothing to him yet. But I don't want to expose this woman until I have discovered how she came to be invited there. Then I'll take you to Broadoak, and we'll see if she recognizes you."

"Then you will be going away again the moment after you arrive," said Earine, reproachfully.

"Oh, another day won't matter. And afterwards you will have to go to Broadoak with me, child. Don't be pathetic."

Just at this point of their colloquy Clara Eastlake and little Psyche found out where Earine was, and carried her off on some of those mysterious enterprises wherewith English ladies occupy their mornings. Vivian, strolling farther away into the grounds of Birklands, met Captain Lester, smoking and sauntering. They joined company, but were for some time comparatively silent. At last Lester said:

"Miss Delisle is a charming young lady."

"Very," said Vivian, dryly.

"Sort of a ward of yours, isn't she? At least so I heard."

"If you feel any particular interest in her, Lester, I'll tell you all I know of her history, but in the strictest confidence. There are very few men whom I would tell; but the moment your little girl introduced me to you, I saw you were a fellow of the right sort. So, if you are

curious, and feel you have a right to be curious, I will relate the little girl's history."

"I don't know about having a right to be curious," said Lester. "You know you were advising me to marry again, and I told you I had seen the very woman I should like to marry. Well, I meant Miss Delisle. She is a perfect creature, in my opinion. I dare say she thinks me an old foggy, though I have twice the strength and vigor of the youngsters of this generation. I dare say she wouldn't look at me if I ventured to ask her. But I thought I would say a word or two to you on the matter, whatever happened."

There was a pause, and the two men walked along a mossy path under a line of lime-trees, smoking meditatively. At length said Vivian,

"If you married a woman, you would like her to love you—to become yours because she loved you better than any other creature."

"Yes," said Lester.

"Do you see any sign of that in Miss Delisle?"

"I fear not."

"You never will. That child will marry you if I tell her to marry you; whether you would be happy together under that condition, judge for yourself."

"She would marry me if you ordered her to do so!" said Lester, in a surprised tone.

"Yes. She would kill herself if I told her to do so. She considers herself my slave. I tell you all this in confidence. And, if you wish it, I will tell you her story."

Again was there a pause, and many puffs of smoke ascended to baffle the bees that were busy among the lime-blossoms.

"No," said Captain Lester, "I won't hear her story, unless she chooses to tell it me herself. You have no objection to my asking her the important question?"

"Not the slightest. If she became your wife, she would be a very fortunate woman."

"Well," said Lester, half to himself and half to his companion, "I think I shall try the perilous experiment. I shall fail, of course: divine beauty like hers is not to be wasted on old fogies. One might as well give Chambertin to a chimney-sweep."

"If any body else called you an old foggy, I suspect there'd be a row," said Vivian, laughing. "And you evidently have more faith in your chances than you admit, or you would not make the trial."

"Well," replied Captain Lester, "I quite agree with Montrose—

He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch,  
To gain or lose it all.

So I mean to try, and take the consequences."

Having thus resolved, Captain Lester did not delay. It was a pleasant summer evening, refreshing after a sultry day. Already the lamps were burning in Eastlake's drawing-room, but

lawn and terrace were more attractive, so the ladies were loitering outside.

Vivian and his friend lingered over the claret, but the Captain watched his opportunity and joined Earine in the evenglome.

Of course he began by talking about the weather. What a blessing, to the uninventive English, is the ever-varying weather of this island! Captain Lester, having left an excellent bottle of Lafitte for the purpose of asking a young lady to marry him, of course began with the utmost innocence to laud the loveliness of the evening.

"What a beautiful moonlight night!"

"Very delightful," she answered.

"I have travelled a great deal by moonlight," went on the gallant Captain, "in all parts of the world and in all sorts of scenery, but there is nothing so beautiful as moonlight among English woods."

"I used to like it on the sea," said Earine, "among the Greek islands."

"You have travelled in Greece?"

"I am a Greek."

"The devil's in the moon for mischief," and when Captain Lester got on that topic, there seemed every chance of his rapidly approaching a tenderer one. Earine's simple statement, however, retarded his advance. He had no notion that she was a Greek; he fancied her a simple English maiden; this bit of unexpected information caused him to meditate.

"No one would think so," he said, after a pause of a few moments. "There is nothing foreign in your manner and speech, Miss Delisle."

"I am very glad to hear you say so. I always fear that I am betraying myself when I speak, or when I do any thing. You have travelled, Captain Lester, and you know that Greek girls live in quite a different way from the young ladies of England. Why, I can remember, in the hot afternoons, I and my cousins, and a bevy of other girls, used to make up swimming parties, and spend hours in the water, and often swim so far out that we could hardly see the shore."

"And were none of you ever drowned? And did nobody steal your clothes?"

"Drowned? Oh dear no! Babies learn to swim before they can walk—swimming is much easier than walking. And as to clothes," she said, with a slight blush, "we never wore enough to tempt a thief."

"A *naïve* young lady," thought Captain Lester, and liked her none the worse for it.

"Would you like to return to Greece?" he asked.

"I am happy in England," she answered.

"I gave my daughter a Greek name," said Lester, "because I love the country."

"She is a delightful little girl," she said, "and has been telling me wonderful English stories that I never heard before. So I have been telling her the adventures of Odysseus, and she believes them all, and likes them very much. Ah! she would enjoy a life in the Greek islands."

Here was an opportunity. Captain Lester was too keen a campaigner not to seize it.

"I would take her there," he said, "if I could persuade some one else to come with us. Will you come, Miss Delisle?"

"Me!" she said, in amazement, turning upon him her great sapphire eyes, which shone like gems in the misty moonlight.

"Yes, Miss Delisle. Will you be my wife? I have admired and loved you from the first moment of our meeting. I am much older than you, but I have as much vigor as most men half my age. I think I could make you happy."

He spoke too volubly to be interrupted, had Earine made the attempt. But she did not try to interrupt him, and was in no haste to reply to him. The thought came to her that perhaps Vivian had encouraged him—a thought which filled those sapphire eyes with lustre of tears, and changed the serenity of her countenance to profound melancholy.

"It is impossible," she said at length.

The sad tone of the girl's voice was sufficient to prove to Captain Lester that indeed it was impossible. He might as well have retired at once, and he felt that he might. Yet it seemed to him cowardly—and even discourteous—to be repelled by the very first refusal.

"Am I too old, Miss Delisle?" he persisted.

"Do you fear that Psyche would be troublesome? I have plenty of money; we could live where you please; we could go away to your favorite Greek islands, and live without the troubles of civilization. For your happiness I would do any thing."

"You are very kind. You are too good for me. But please say no more. It is indeed impossible."

Convinced of the futility of further persistence, Captain Lester said,

"I will not trouble you any more, Miss Delisle. I see it is useless. Let us be friends, as before."

"I am so grateful to you, Captain Lester," said Earine, frankly, placing her hand in his.

"We shall always be friends, I hope."

"Always," he said, emphatically, holding for a moment her tremulous hand, and thinking what a slender flower-like thing it was.

And the Captain meant it; for he was a chivalrous gentleman, and could never think otherwise than with reverence and attachment of the woman he had vainly loved.

Lo, there is a sound of young voices and gay laughter under the lindens, and a flutter of white skirts, and red-tressed Psyche comes dancing along the turf, exclaiming—

"Oh papa! Oh Earine! Coffee has been waiting such a time! Mr. Eastlake says you must have run away together."

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus began Vivian's sojourn at Eastlake's. He intended to return to Broadoak in a few days. I fancy he staid a few months.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MURDER.

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

ONE morning, as they sat at breakfast, with all the windows wide open, and the soft breeze of July breathing over the velvet lawns, and bearing into the pleasant rooms the divine fragrance of a myriad roses, the letters and papers were as usual delivered.

It was a delightful day. Every body had come down stairs in the most joyous of humors; the two young ladies, in their light print dresses, looked as fresh as flowers. Vivian, in the gayest mood, was telling little Psyche his dreams, as fantastic as Arabian Night fragments; Captain Lester seemed to have recovered from his disappointment, and was full of cheery talk; and as to Jack Eastlake, he was as jolly as all the jolliest of Mr. Charles Dickens's characters rolled into one. How is it that when people are in this temper there almost invariably comes something to upset them?

Jack Eastlake, lounging over his coffee and grilled fowl, indolently opened his "Times."

"No news, of course," he remarked. "Duke of Plantagenet come to grief on the turf at last. Sheriff's officers in his house with claims for half a million. Biggs, clerk in a bank at two pounds a week, has been living at the rate of twenty thousand a year, and inviting his Directors to meet Peers at dinner; now he's absconded, and every body's very much astonished. The Prime Minister is going to bring in a bill to disestablish himself. Nothing very fresh, you see."

"I always think," said Vivian, "that it is a great mistake to look at newspapers when you are in the country. It's the time to forget politics and literature, and to enjoy life. It's so pleasant to think that a revolution or an invasion or an earthquake may be happening while one lies on one's back upon the turf, and smokes a cigar, and watches the floating clouds. As for me, when I wander about I don't even let people know where I am going."

"Every body is not so independent as you, Mr. Vivian," said Lester.

"By Jove, Vivian!" exclaimed Eastlake abruptly, "here's something that concerns you. Look at this."

And he walked to the window with the "Times" in his hand, and pointed out a paragraph to Vivian, who had followed him. So pale had Eastlake turned, that both his daughter and Earine perceived that there was something serious.

The paragraph, which Vivian read with dilating eyes and quickened pulse, narrated the death by poison of Rupert Redfern, Esquire, of Broadoak Avon, and the inquest held upon his body, and the detention in custody of his wife, Lady Eva Redfern, on suspicion of having committed the murder. Mr. Redfern, according to the narrative, had quite recently been attacked by some mysterious ailment, which required medi-

cal treatment. The physicians were baffled, until the arrival of Dr. Fownes, famous for his studies in toxicology, who immediately pronounced it a case of slow poisoning. His opinion amazed the country doctors, who warmly controverted it; he, knowing he was right, took resolute measures, and did the best he could to administer the right antidote. But he was too late. The poison—one of the latest inventions of chemistry—had taken too firm a hold of its victim; and Rupert Redfern, one of the strongest men in Europe, was subtly destroyed in the very prime of his life. That he had been slowly poisoned, was incontestably proved at the inquest; it was also shown that his wife, Lady Eva, always personally administered his food and medicine, and allowed no one else to interfere with them. Hence it happened that she was now virtually a prisoner, under the coroner's warrant, at Broadoak Manor.

These facts Vivian learned from the "Times." Other facts there were, which he learned later, and from other sources; among them, that the tenants and laborers on the Broadoak Manor estates were perfectly maddened by the Squire's death—but that they resolutely refused to believe Lady Eva his murderess.

"I must go to Broadoak at once," said Vivian, in a strange, low whisper to his friend. "But come out on the terrace a moment. Look here; Eva never did this thing; I believe I know who did it. I will go off by rail at once. I'll ride to the station if you'll let one of your grooms come to take the mare back. Now will you come over to Broadoak, and bring Earine, some time to-day? It is most important—I can't stop to explain why."

"Rely on me, my dear fellow," said Eastlake. "I'll ride with you to the station, and then come back and have some lunch, and bring Earine by the very next train."

"Good!" said Vivian. "You're a true friend. I must go to poor Eva's help. The child will be distracted. Ask Earine to come out to me."

Earine came.

"My child," he said, "I am going to Broadoak at once. Eastlake will tell you why. He will follow by the next train, and bring you. Good-bye."

In ten minutes more he was in the saddle, and his mare, Ianthe, was giving Eastlake's cob, a fine vigorous weight-carrier, a thorough breathing. The five miles to the station took less than a quarter of an hour. Luckily there was a train in a few minutes. Vivian sprang into a smoking-carriage, just saying to Eastlake,

"Thanks, old fellow. Come on as soon as possible."

It was a ride of an hour and a half. As he sat alone in the carriage, he reflected on the strange state of affairs. That Eva had murdered her husband was simply ridiculous. They loved each other—not with the intensest love, which Eva had not learned, and which the Squire could never teach her—but better

than ninety-nine out of a hundred of the people who marry. No; Vivian felt sure that the murder was committed by Madame de Petigny Garnuchot. But why? How could it profit this woman, this French spy? This baffled him.

"I must find out," he thought, "how Eva came to know her; then perhaps I shall get a clue."

Then the willful demon that possessed him suggested that his beautiful cousin was now a widow—aye, and a wealthy widow, for the estates were unentailed, and there could be no doubt that the Squire had left every thing to his wife.

"The child confessed that she loved me," mused Vivian, "that day when I played priest at Avoncliff. By-the-way," he suddenly thought, "can the priests have any thing to do with this vile business? Confound them, I believe they are up to all manner of mischief. Had the Garnuchot any connection with that plausible *sacerdos*, I wonder? Spies and Jesuits are nearly related. I hope poor Eva will be collected enough to tell me how she met with that hideous woman."

As he thus meditated, the train stopped, and he heard the porter exclaim—

"Springfield! Springfield!"

This was the station for Broadoak Avon. A two-mile drive in a rickety fly, and he should see his unhappy cousin.

Even that slow drive came to an end at last. Vivian found Broadoak in charge of the police, and Lady Eva confined to her own apartment under their care. None of her relations had yet reached her.

At first he had some difficulty in forcing his way through the guard of bucolic constables; but we know his resolute temper.

He succeeded, of course, and found Eva alone, sitting in a chair by the window, looking with tearless eyes towards the winding Avon.

"Eva!"

She recognized his voice, and sprang from her seat into his arms, and wept profusely. He wisely let her weep.

"Oh Vivian," she said at last, "I knew you would come. My good dear Rupert is dead. And they say I have killed him."

"They are liars, my darling," he replied. "Be calm. We will find out who did this cruel deed. I am come to help you, and will not fail. Trust me, Eva, will you not?"

"Yes, Valentine, I trust you."

"I did not think Rupert had an enemy. He was too good."

"He was indeed," she sobbed; "I did not know how good he was till now. I did not love him half well enough."

"Don't take such fancies into your head, my child. Now I want you to tell me one thing. How came that Frenchwoman, Madame Garnuchot, into the house?"

"She was recommended to me," said Eva, hesitatingly, "by a Catholic priest I know, Father Isidore."

"Of Avoncliff?"

"Yes."

"That will do, my dear Eva. I must start at once to find that priest. But I can see you have taken no food lately: promise me to eat, and to drink some wine. I'll send it you at once. It is most important that I should go, but I can not go until you promise."

Eva promised: and Vivian, finding her maid, insisted on her immediately taking some refreshment to her mistress. Then he went to the library. There was Catelan, reading and writing as calmly as if there had been no murder committed since Cain killed Abel.

He rose to receive Vivian.

"M. Catelan," said the latter, in a low voice, "is Madame de Petigny Garnuchot here still?"

"Oh yes."

"Listen. I know she is a *mouchard*—a spy upon you. I believe she poisoned Mr. Redfern. I must be away for some hours: will you take care that she does not leave the house till I return?"

"I will," said Catelan, earnestly.

"Thanks," replied Vivian, grasping the Frenchman's hand.

Without further colloquy he went to the stables, ordered out a horse that he knew could go, and rode straight toward Avoncliff.

"Ah!" said the groom that had brought out the horse, to one of his fellow-servants, "it's all right now. Them lying scoundrels as said Lady Eva done it will find their mistake, now Mr. Vivian's come."

"You're right, Jim," was the reply. "Damn them interfering police!"

Vivian, when he reached Avoncliff, left his horse at the *Talbot*, and walked to Father Isidore's residence. The priest was at home. He seemed perfectly amazed to see before him the man who had played such an abominable trick upon him. But Vivian, unabashed, at once addressed him:

"I am not come," he said, "to apologize for having taken your place in the confessional—I want to speak of something more important."

"More important than sacrilege!" ejaculated Father Isidore, his dark eyes kindling with a lurid light of anger.

"I think so," said Vivian, quietly. "At any rate, listen to what I have to tell you, and we can discuss the sacrilege afterwards."

"Be it so."

"You know Lady Eva Redfern, of Broadoak Manor. She is now in the custody of the police, charged with poisoning her husband."

"Can it be true?" asked the priest in a tone of horror. "Is Mr. Redfern dead?"

"He is dead. And, as Lady Eva would no doubt succeed to the bulk of his property—and as she is a Catholic—you can best judge whether his murder was intended to benefit your Church."

"What do you mean?" said the priest. "Do you dare to insinuate that I prompted this atrocious crime?"

"It is curious," replied Vivian, "that there is a person residing at Broadoak whom I know to be a woman of bad character—a Madame de Petigny Garnuchot—and that she was introduced by you."

"What do you know of her?" asked Father Isidore.

"More perhaps than you do. Did the persons who recommended her as a fit companion for Lady Eva confide to you her history?"

"I have every reason to believe her a devout and pious woman," said Father Isidore.

"Have you!" rejoined Vivian, with a sardonic laugh. "I have reason to believe otherwise. I know her to be a convicted criminal, and a police spy; and I believe her to have murdered Rupert Redfern. I hope she did not do it by the command of the Church."

Vivian could see that the priest was alarmed and perplexed.

He remained for some time in reflective silence. Then he said:

"Madame Garnuchot was recommended to me by a person whom I must not name, as a lady of good birth and true piety, who wished an introduction to English society, and who might exert a useful influence over recent converts. When I saw her, she appeared to realize this description. I introduced her to Lady Eva Redfern, who liked her very much, and invited her to stay at Broadoak. That is all I know of her, on my honor as a gentleman. Can you prove what you tell me about her?"

"Every word of it. And this person you must not name is a dignitary of your Church, I suppose?"

"He is my ecclesiastical superior."

"He is something more, you see. He is intimately connected with the French police; and he has made you a tool, representing a woman of the vilest character as a lady of birth and piety."

"I can not believe it," said the priest. "And you suspect her of having committed the murder? What good could it do to her or any body else?"

"That," said Vivian, "is more than I can understand. But here are the facts. This woman is in the house on false pretences. She is a convicted criminal in the pay of the police—surely a person more likely to commit murder than my innocent cousin, Eva. Eva has confessed to you—and I am sure she has never any deadly sin to confess."

"What do you wish me to do?" asked the priest.

"Well," said Vivian, "if it is allowed in your Church, I should write a sharp interrogatory letter to this ecclesiastical superior of yours. And I want you to come to Broadoak at once. It is your duty to do all you can for Lady Eva."

The priest agreed to write this letter, and to start at once for Broadoak. Vivian was soon on the road back. When he reached the house, he found there had been arrivals, and among

them the Marquis of Alvescott, who was with his daughter. Moreover, some county magistrates had arrived, and were holding counsel as to what must be done. Vivian also found that Madame Garnuchot had attempted to get away, but that Catelan had prevented her—saying that no one could be allowed to leave the house who was in it at the time of the murder. The lady had been very much enraged, but Catelan was resolute.

Soon after Vivian's return arrived Father Isidore on foot, and Eastlake and Earine in a fly from the railway-station. Vivian took them all three to his own rooms, out of the way of Madame Garnuchot, who was sulking in her own. And having left them in safety, he joined Lord Alvescott.

"This is a damned queer business," said that outspoken peer. I regret to say that the Marquis, having in his time used a great deal of strong language to jockeys and trainers, could not avoid introducing it in his ordinary conversations. "What the devil do these idiots mean by suspecting Eva? The insolent scoundrels! I should like to horsewhip that blockhead of a coroner."

"If we take things quietly," said Vivian, "we shall soon settle the affair. I think I know the murderer."

"Damned shame to murder old Redfern!" said the Marquis. "He was the best fellow I ever knew. He lent me twenty thousand at a day's notice, that time I lost such a pot of money on Touch-and-go for the Derby. Who did it, do you think?"

"I believe it was a Frenchwoman that is stopping in the house, though why she should do it I can't understand. However, I see that some of poor Redfern's neighbors, who are magistrates, are here; and, if you have no objection, we'll go and talk to them. They're in the library."

The Marquis assented.

In the library they found four gentlemen, pleasant country neighbors of the Squire's, and justices of the peace. One of these, Sir Harry Burrell, Vivian knew very well, as he was a frequent guest at Broadoak. So he introduced the Marquis—who, as one of the Turf's most splendid patrons, was of course received with all due honor. As at Eton the Captain of the Boats is greater than the Head-master, so in a wider arena the princely owner of race-horses is more admired and revered than the Prime Minister. Who would not rather be a Glasgow than a Gladstone?

## CHAPTER XX.

### WHICH IS THE MURDERESS?

"'Twould solve full many a difficult enigma  
If every crime produced an instant stigma."

"GENTLEMEN," said Vivian, after a little preliminary conversation had taken place, "we all of us know Lady Eva Redfern, and, whatever

the suspicion that may be attached to her by circumstances, those who know her best will feel most certain that she is incapable of the atrocious act which some one has committed. I was staying with a friend when the terrible news reached me, and the moment I heard it I felt a strong suspicion of another person. There is a Frenchwoman staying in this house under false pretenses. She has committed crimes in her own country, and I believe her to be guilty of this murder. If you will permit me, I will bring in one or two persons who can throw a light on her history."

"By all means, Mr. Vivian," said Sir Harry Burrell.

So Vivian summoned his witnesses and M. Catelan.

"Father Isidore," he said, "will you kindly explain to these gentlemen the circumstances under which the person calling herself Madame de Petigny Garnuchot entered this house?"

The priest told his story simply. The lady in question had been recommended to him by a person in whom he had complete confidence. She wished to see a little English society; she was well-born and devout; her companionship was well adapted to confirm the faith of new converts. He therefore introduced her to Lady Eva Redfern, who had lately embraced the Catholic faith.

"What! my daughter!" roared Lord Alvescott. "You d—d Jesuit scoundrel!"

"Who recommended this lady to you?" asked Sir Harry Burrell.

"I am not permitted to answer that question," said the priest.

"You'll have to do so when you're examined on oath, my fine fellow," said the impetuous Marquis. "I suppose you call yourself a gentleman. Is it gentlemanly to conceal the name of the man who has sent a murderess among us?"

"We shall get at the truth in time," said Vivian. "I have now to mention the purpose with which this woman came to Broadoak. M. Achille Catelan, whose name is known throughout Europe, is one of the most determined enemies of the present political system in France. His fame is known to every one present. For some reason or other, I suspected Madame Garnuchot of being a spy; I saw that she was very attentive to M. Catelan's correspondence, and I found her out by sending a servant of mine with a letter to him, which he was to allow her to intercept and open. This I myself saw her read. After such a transaction I kept no terms with her. I opened two of her own letters, one of which gave me a clue to her history. I allowed these letters to go on, but have kept copies of them, which are here."

And he handed them to Sir Harry, whose French, I fear, was rather musty. At any rate, Madame's free use of *argot* was too much for him.

"The young lady whom I have brought here," continued Vivian, "Miss Delisle, is a ward of mine. I placed her at a school at Rouen, con-

nected with a convent. The Prioress was a cruel woman, and treated the nuns and the pupils abominably; and suddenly the police discovered that she was an impostor—a servant-girl who, by a cunning trick, had stepped into her mistress's position. So the convent was suddenly broken up, and she was taken away to the Prison Mazas in Paris."

"I heard of that affair," interposed Catelan.

"From one of those letters I suspected that Madame Garnuchot and the sham Prioress were the same person. I showed the letters to Miss Delisle, who declares that they are in the Prioress's writing. If she is brought face to face with Miss Delisle, I have no doubt she will recognize her."

"Have her in at once," said Sir Harry Burrell.

"A moment," said Catelan. "I have heard of this woman. If Madame Garnuchot is she, I have the means of identifying her."

Madame, it was found, had locked herself in her apartment, and for some time declined to open the door. When she at last gave way, Vivian remarked a fire on the hearth, though it was a sultry day, and noticed that she had been burning papers.

"Egad," he thought to himself, "I ought to have defied the law, and had her searched."

Then he whispered to Mark Walsh (who had the convenient faculty of always turning up when he was wanted) to telegraph to London to Dr. Fownes, and to lock up Madame's rooms, and take good care that not even an atom of burnt paper was removed.

"Madame," he said courteously, "will you kindly come with me to the library. My cousin's father, the Marquis of Alvescott, is here, and wishes to make your acquaintance."

Vivian offered her his arm, which she took, and led her to the library.

"My lord," he said, "this is Madame de Petigny Garnuchot."

Every body save Vivian and Catelan looked at her with interest—they were watching Earine. The Greek girl sprang forward a step, with flashing eyes and compressed lips—looking like the huntress Artemis about to transfix some flying creature with her unerring shaft.

"Yes," she said, "it is she!"

"You know this young lady, I believe," said Vivian, bringing Madame face to face with Earine.

There was a start of surprise, so slight as to be scarcely perceptible.

"No," she answered, "I have not that honor."

"You do not remember her, perhaps. And yet it is not very long since she was at school at the Rouen convent, of which you professed to be Prioress."

"I was never at Rouen in my life," she said, calmly.

"What a d—d fine actress she is!" exclaimed Lord Alvescott.

"Permit me," said M. Catelan. "You were

never at Rouen, Madame. Were you ever in Corsica?"

The question evidently took her by surprise, but she conquered it.

"Certainly not," she said.

"If this lady is the person you want, gentlemen," pursued Catelan, "she is the unworthy daughter of an old friend of mine. I need not mention his name. His eldest son, insulted by a French soldier at Ajaccio, killed him and fled to the mountains. A party of troops were sent in pursuit. The young man hid in a cave not far from his father's house, and his sisters carried him food there. The officer in command of the detachment could not find him, but felt certain he was near his father's house. So he kept his men in that neighborhood, and he made acquaintance with the youngest daughter, who was only fifteen. He made love to this girl, gave her jewels, amused himself with her, finally induced her to tell him her brother's hiding-place. Then the soldiers fell upon him, and he killed his sister's betrayer and two others, and was killed himself. It was long before her father discovered her treason; but she became a mother, and the trinkets the Frenchman gave her were found, and she confessed every thing. Her child, happily, died. Her father said, 'If you were my son I would shoot you, as the herdsman of Alata shot his traitorous boy. I must give you another punishment.' He branded her on the right shoulder with the letter 'T'; and then took her over to France, and obtained a place for her as a menial servant. But she was too clever to remain in that position, and I have heard many of her adventures since, and among them that of the Rouen convent. If this is the woman, her father's brand is on her shoulder now."

"D—n it, strip off her clothes and see!" cried the Marquis.

Some women-servants had found their way into the library by this time.

"Mary," said Vivian to one of them, "just assist Madame Garnuchot to remove a part of her dress, so that we may see her shoulder."

Madame was recalcitrant.

"It is indecent," she shrieked. "I will not. You English are brutal."

And she resisted so resolutely that it took three or four of the maids to bare her shoulder.

But when it was accomplished every one could see, branded indelibly by her Corsican father's red-hot iron, the terrible letter 'T'.

"Yes!" she shrieked, in a voice of wild passion, "it is true. I am Teresa the Traitor! I am she whom they called Teresita! Well, what of it? Auguste Lancel loved me, and my father did not? Is that any reason why I should kill Monsieur Redfern? He was good to me; he was good to every body; why should I kill him? Was it my fault that I loved Auguste? Did I know that he would kill my brother Carlo? My father called me his Teresita—his darling daughter—and then when I loved some one else he was cruel to me, cruel,

cruel! I loved Auguste—I told him all he asked me—how could I help it? How could I know what he meant to do? He too was cruel, but not so cruel as my father. Which of you would treat his daughter as my father treated me?"

I think this appeal went to the heart of the magisterial paternity and paternal magistracy which were mingled in that presence. The British paterfamilias will torture his pet daughter to any extent; he will make her, if he can, marry some one she cordially abhors; he will force her to surrender the floral beauty of her maidenhood to some coarse animal who is entirely her inferior in every thing—except money. But I do not think the ordinary British paterfamilias would care to brand his daughter's ivory shoulder with a scorching iron heated to redness. And yet the Corsican father who had done this thing would have scorned the idea of marrying his daughter for money. Corsica, you see, is an uncivilized island. England is civilized.

"She was cruelly treated," said Sir Harry Burrell.

"I don't know," said M. Catelan. "The Corsican method is effective, since it enables us to identify this woman, and find out something of her previous life."

At this point a servant informed Vivian that Dr. Fownes had arrived, and he passed on the information to Sir Harry Burrell. Madame Garnuchot was thereupon dismissed to a room which she had not previously occupied, and the magisterial party, in company with the famous toxicological analyst, proceeded to her apartments. The investigation which ensued was resultless. Nothing was to be made of the dark ash of burnt papers. Nowhere was there any trace of poison, or of phial which could have contained it.

The Great Unpaid are very much satirized by flippant journalists; but flippancy is very easy, and common sense is very uncommon. On the present occasion they had rather a difficult matter to decide, and I think their decision was sagacious enough. Lady Eva Redfern and Madame de Petigny Garnuchot were both accused of the murder. There was not much definite evidence either way; but Lady Eva had been the Squire's sole attendant, while Madame Garnuchot was proved to be a spy and a criminal. Evidently it was a case for that palladium of civil and religious (and uncivil and irreligious) liberty, the Great British jury. So both accused persons were committed for trial, equal bail to be accepted in each case. That Lady Eva's bail was found at once, while nobody offered to risk a guinea for Madame Garnuchot, is, I fear, a terrible proof of English prejudice against foreigners. It is only too true.

So Madame de Petigny Garnuchot was conveyed to Riverdale Castle—once a feudal fortress of John of Gaunt's, and now a county jail—while Lady Eva remained at Broadoak Avon till the Assizes.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## HEART-BREAK.

"No truer word, save God's, was ever spoken,  
Than that the largest heart is sooner broken."

LANDOR.

LADY EVA REDFERN, the beautiful fair creature whom I tried to describe twenty chapters ago, the lithe and lissom and lovable beauty of the house of Alvescott, was now crushed down by circumstance. Say what you will, Circumstance is the devil. I forget what philosopher first discovered the malignity of matter. But here is the fact—and it is a fact which nobody sufficiently considers—that mere material surroundings are too strong for the immortal spirit.

Here was our poor Lady Eva: every body who knew her knew the impossibility of her killing her husband. Why, she could not have killed a bird or a bee! The idea of death made her shudder. And then to think of her killing by poison, of all ways in the world! Why, where should she learn the vile meaning of poison? Still, surrounded by the reticulations and decussations of circumstantial evidence, this innocent creature had to await the arrival of the Judge of Assize, who, with the aid of a jury of twelve persons carefully chosen for their illiteracy, would decide whether or not she might be permitted to live.

There was a higher Assize for Eva. The little girl, if you looked at external circumstances, should have been the happiest wife in England. She had the handsomest, and wealthiest, and kindest husband. Dear Squire Redfern, whom some unknown hand had poisoned, was the most chivalrous of men; only he had one slight failing, which is sometimes harmful. He did not know the true meaning of *love*. But Eva might have been happy enough with him, if only there had been children. There weren't: so she tried to amuse herself with flirtation with her cousin Vivian and confession to Father Isidore. Both very hollow amusements: dissatisfied young wives are hereby warned that neither cousins nor priests can supply what husbands fail to supply.

It was just at sunset, when the western summer sky was filled with colors unimaginable, that Lady Eva sent for her Cousin Vivian.

He came.

He saw her soft brown tresses, very long and very lovely, straying over the white pillow. He saw her beautiful slender hands, from which the faint rosy tinge had died away, moving nervously on the coverlet. He saw a strange light in her deep brown eyes, and he knew its meaning—*death*.

And her first words meant the same.

"I am dying, Val—I want to say good-bye. I shall soon see dear old Rupert."

He knelt at her bedside. He saw the strange light in those dusky eyes. He knew its meaning, and acknowledged the presence of God.

"Do you remember the River Otter, Val?" she said, "How clear the water was, and yet how brown! What fun we had there on sum-

mer afternoons! Tell me, Val," she exclaimed, with sudden transition, "shall I see Rupert when I die? Shall I see him *directly*? I do so want to tell him that I *did* love him, you know. He knows I didn't kill him, by this time. Oh, I shall soon see him, Val—very, very soon."

Yes, she saw him very, very soon, and I feel certain they are happier now than they were on earth. For they did not understand each other here. The Squire wanted just an additional something to suit him to Eva; but heaven has no Squires, and I hope he suits her now.

They held an inquest upon her, and brought in a verdict of heart-disease. They were right. It was that heart-disease which poets recognize: the child's heart was broken. She had lost a husband whom she loved less than he deserved, and she was accused of killing him. Was not this enough, even in these days of cordial ossification, to produce heart-disease?

Yes, there was an inquest on Lady Eva. God forgive coroner and jury! Why don't men hold inquests on the death of a sunset—on the silence of a nightingale—on the fall of a star? Why should not commonplace stupidity sit in judgment on all that is sublime—on all that is lovely?

Vivian went out of his cousin's chamber, where she lay still and cold, in a strangely bewildered state. It was evening. The terror of this tragedy had passed into his brain. He walked quietly out into the gardens, and sat under a great plane-tree on the terrace. Ah, how well did he remember that beautiful tree! Its shuddering pavilion of leafage was haunted by happy memories. Many an hour of summer twilight had he spent there with his Cousin Eva, smoking his cigar, and talking in moods of humorous gayety. These times could never return. Far back went his imagination to the old old times when Eva was a gay young creature, and had not tasted the wine of the world. It seemed so short a time ago that she was a merry thoughtless little girl; and now, after a brief life of luxury and misery, she was gone forever. He could see the stars through the undulating leaves above him. Was she there? Had her sweet spirit departed to some pure orb in the immeasurable distance?

Unhappy Vivian! Crushed by the sadness of the eventful hour, he laid his forehead on his hands and wept bitterly.

They were tears of fever, not of relief. He could not think; he could not hope. It seemed to him that some inexorable fate had brought anguish to him, and to all whom he loved. He tried to pray—vainly; for prayer is the speech of man to God, and man can not always speak, though God is always listening. His wild whisper of prayer was inarticulate. Was there a God to whom to speak? Vivian did not know. Only he felt that his prayer came back to him like some baffled bird that tries to soar through mist and vapor, and is beaten back to earth with drenched powerless wings.



"I think I am mad," said Vivian to himself.

How long he sat uninterrupted beneath this great plane-tree he did not know. Fallen into a hopeless lethargy, he remained there apathetically, though the night had changed, though the stars were drowned in vapors, though a small misty rain was falling. By-and-by he was aroused by a hand upon his arm, by a voice in his ear.

"Is she dead?" asked the strange, startling voice.

Vivian looked up, and saw for a moment only the beautiful rustic countenance of Mary Ashow, but the glow of happy health had left, and it seemed as if Mary's ghost had walked out into the misty melancholy night. He knew her for a moment only: he said, with a strange smile,

"Yes, quite dead!"

Then he leaned back against the trunk of the great plane-tree, and relapsed into his former apathy.

Poor Mary Ashow, who had of course heard all the details of the Broadoak tragedy, had just caught the news that Lady Eva was dead. This seemed worse to her than all. She had so vivid a recollection of the lady of Broadoak in her vigor and beauty: to think of her as dying, falsely accused, seemed a thing too terrible. She could not stay quietly at home. She crept up to the terrace of the great house to gain some information, hoping against hope that what she had heard might be untrue; and the first person she saw was her old acquaintance Vivian, whose appearance startled her terribly.

For, though the moon was hidden by misty clouds, her light filled the air as water fills a sponge, and Mary Ashow could see that Vivian's luxuriant hair was turned white, every thread of it.

The farmer's daughter, I imagine, saved his life. The apathy into which he had fallen was like that which comes on men who can fight no longer against snow-drifts. When he had uttered those three terrible words—*Yes, quite dead*—he fell back helplessly against the trunk of the plane-tree. Mary tried to waken him; it was vain.

"What am I to do?" she exclaimed. "He is dying!"

At that moment there loomed through the mist, a huge human form, to wit, that of John Grainger. The good fellow was in the habit of following his little mistress, dog-like, at long distances.

She was wont to scold him for so doing, in a pretty piquant way which he by no means disliked.

But now she did not scold him.

"Oh, John," she cried, "look at poor Mr. Vivian. Look at his hair. What is the matter with him? What shall we do?"

John Grainger answered the question practically. He lifted Vivian from the seat under the plane-tree, and carried him away as if he

had been a baby towards the Mill Farm, merely saying,

"Come along, Mary."

So quickly did the rustic young giant stride along that Mary found it hard to keep up with him. But she managed to do it; and Vivian was soon placed in the softest of down beds, with cooling drinks at hand, and bonny Mary Ashow close to his pillow in the capacity of nurse.

Her nursing capacity was amply tested. For weeks he lay powerless and unconscious at Broadoak Mill Farm. The anguish of his Cousin Eva's death had sorely smitten him; it was evident to those who watched him that no other thought approached his brain. He spoke sometimes, but it was only to say over and over again, *Quite dead, yes, quite dead*. When awake, his large steel-blue eyes seemed always to gaze on some strange sight far away. They guessed that he beheld his cousin; at any rate, he beheld no living creature.

Not even Earine. The Greek girl came to his bedside, and helped Mary Ashow to tend him.

When the news of his sudden illness reached Broadoak, Jack Eastlake of course came down at once, and took with him Earine. With him also went Dr. Fownes, who declared that Vivian could not be moved. Besides, whither to move him? When the sad funeral business was over, the great house would be left in the hands of servants, to await the coming of the heir—a first cousin of the Squire's, at that time travelling in Syria.

Jack Eastlake and Farmer Ashow, who took to one another at first sight, different as were their temperaments, settled it between them. The worthy farmer was a little puzzled at first as to Miss Delisle's relation to the sick man; but it may well be supposed that the impetuous Earine would not leave the man she loved, and Eastlake made Ashow dimly understand that she was in some way or other Vivian's ward. And so it came to pass that Vivian lay in the quietest chamber of the Mill Farm, where no sound came to him save the slumberous rush of the mill-race and the soft susurrus of the wind in the great limes by the Avon.

The wild spirit was quenched in him. The vivid, eccentric temper was tamed. One idea, one only, was stamped upon his brain—the idea of Eva Redfern lying dead. He had loved his cousin with the love which one bears to a sister; her sudden and unhappy death had torn his heart-strings. Day after day the doctors visited him, and sagaciously shook their heads, and talked wisely of catalepsy, and doubted whether he ever would recover.

Isolation is the law of humanity. Every one of us is an island, though not without the feeling that once these sporadic isles formed a single continent. But there is no isolation so marvellously complete as that which is effected when a malady of the brain shuts out the great panorama of life, and leaves the spirit of man

face to face with one idea. The world goes on as of old; the voices of beloved friends murmur outside, but are wholly unheard; all the artillery of all Europe's armies shall not wake that sleeper. He is as if shut in a granite vault, with a mighty block of the primal stone set over him to keep his ghost from walking. He has dropped out of the world into the universe—out of the commonplace realm of circumstance into the land that is very far off.

So far off was that land whereunto Vivian's spirit wandered, that it was doubtful whether it ever could be recalled. Jack Eastlake, friendliest of friends, insisted on calling perpetual councils of doctors. They had nothing to suggest; lawyers and doctors are alike in this painful sterility of ideas. So the long days and weeks went on; and Valentine Vivian, kept alive by essences of game and meat, and draughts of Champagne, lay in the great bedroom at the Farm, looking ever straight towards one strange sad vision; and the two girls, nursing him carefully, longed for happier days, and meanwhile talked much to each other.

They suited each other, even as did Jack Eastlake and the farmer, though wide was the difference between them. Plump Mary Ashow had seldom been outside the boundary of her own parish; slender stately Earine had been in Grecian seas, sailing beneath a pirate's flag. Mary had played at confession, as we know; Earine had felt the discipline in a Rouen convent. Each had something to learn from the other. In their strolls together in the garden of the Mill Farm, where the marigold—*Calendula*, so called, because it blooms in all calends—had found its way into every border; or by the side of the Avon, where the great white water-lilies, their Parian vases filled with small black flies, rested indolently on the surface of the stream; the two girls interchanged ideas not unserviceably. Each told the other her story; each wondered at the other; and Mary grew wiser and calmer, and Earine began to perceive the prodigious propriety of being commonplace and conventional.

Mr. Gladstone has lately written a book (which I don't mean to read) proving a great many things about Homer. Among them, I hear, is this: that the Princess Nausikaa was by no means such an unblushing young lady as the "Odyssey" was supposed to assert, but was very much ashamed indeed of the hero who was thrown naked on the shore of Scheria. We are all of us quite wrong in our notions of Homeric simplicity; they are as polite and refined as we are, those creatures of the past, and Hector's Andromache (ah, divine vision of wifely love!) wore a chignon and crinoline. Thank you, Mr. Gladstone. You flatter yourself you understand the days when Achilles fought and Nestor advised, Odysseus spoke and Thersites satirized.

I happen to know that a Nausikaa is possible—for I have known Earine.

## CHAPTER XXII.

JOHN GRAINGER.

"Mistress Mary,  
Quite contrary!"

Yes, our old acquaintance, John Grainger, farmer and wrestler, chemist and mathematician, carried on his stalwart shoulders to the Mill Farm the man whom he hated and despised.

John Grainger was rather a curious young fellow. He was ugly and inelegant, as I have said; he was by no means brilliant, but rather slow and ox-like. On the other hand, he was as strong as Achilles and Abraham Cann, and as brave as—I was going to say a lion; but as lions are sheer cowards, I prefer to say—an English mastiff. Further, he was a lover of truth, moral and intellectual: hence his intense love for science, which he studied with a laborious resolution which compensated for his unquestionable want of brilliancy or originality.

The life of a young fellow of this order, just on the verge of manhood, isolated from other people both by circumstances and by natural disposition, is not easily to be made intelligible. John Grainger was not a man who could readily understand the world in which he had to live. He was ambitious to take a fitting position in that world, and exaggerated his own disadvantages. He lived, for the most part, a lonely, life; working hard at farming, but aware that Farmer Ashow looked upon him with something like contempt; and studying his favorite sciences throughout the midnight hours. But, dear reader, agriculture and mathematics do not satisfy all the glowing desires of a young man. His fancy flies to fairer things; and as to this young man, he lived under the same roof with pretty Mary Ashow, and of course he was in love with her—or thought so.

Here it was especially that John Grainger's science failed him. He could fathom chemical and mathematical difficulties, but a mere girl was too much for him. Why, she was never in the same mood two minutes of the day. Sometimes she was singing like a lark, and the next moment as pensive as a quonist. If she made him a promise, she was sure to break it; if she would not promise what he asked, she very often did it. She was such an odd delicious mixture of caprice and pathos, that the poor boy who loved her was utterly puzzled what to make of her.

Of course he knew she despised him—had he not heard her tell Vivian so? A wiser wooer than he would have known that from female lips such words are written in water. He took every thing *au grand sérieux*. Boys do, or they would not be boys.

Of course he had resolved, after that day of the lesson in botany and the fatal spider orchis, never to care for her again. Equally of course, when Vivian had vanished, and she naturally tried again to fascinate John Grainger, he made no resolute resistance. She soon won him back again. Soon! Why, it was done in a minute.

Which of us, though as old as Savage Landor when he wrote his last poem, can resist the beseeching eyes and pouting mouth of the creature he loves?

*Loves!* Well, that word must be taken *cum grano salis* in John Grainger's case. Can a boy of that age love? I doubt it. The movement of mind which such young fellows feel towards women with whom they associate is merely a symptom and prelude of the coming passion. The true madness comes later—many years later in most men—if it comes at all. You see this singularly shown in young poets. Mr. Swinburne is a notable example—as also was Keats. Mr. Swinburne professes to be an erotic poet above all things; yet, after reading every line of his published poetry, I am convinced that he has not the faintest idea of the meaning of the word *love*. As to Keats, his "*Endymion*" gives one the notion of love-poetry written by girls, in some province of Fairyland where boys had never been heard of.

But John Grainger, though a mere boy, had within him the capacity of love; and his gay little capricious mistress whistled him back to her as if he had been a mighty mastiff, which animal he mightily resembled; and he followed her everywhere with the mastiff's fidelity, and so happened to be in time to carry Vivian down to the Farm, thereby doubtless saving his life.

And now there came a new era in the life of John Grainger. His had been a very quiet commonplace life, and he had seen few people in any way his own intellectual equals. Earine flashed upon him like some preternatural vision. When she came to stay at the Mill Farm, she seemed to reveal to him a new form of life, a higher and more spiritual sphere of existence. Her marvellous beauty, her tranquil nameless grace, came upon him like a miracle; but there was more, far more, in her perfect simplicity of character, in the absence of all coquetry and caprice. She was to him a new sort of woman, as indeed she would have been to men of far wider experience than his.

Mary Ashow and he had been very good friends, and he had tried to carry on with her a little of what he would have styled sweethearting—the upper classes call it flirtation. But when he and Mary were together they were always somehow at cross purposes.

Now, when he made acquaintance with Earine, he found that there were no cross purposes. She would have calmly smiled at any attempt at "sweethearting;" in fact, her very look showed the impossibility of such a thing. She was surrounded by an atmosphere of perfect simplicity, and talked as freely to John Grainger as if he had been her brother.

Grainger, himself possessing the rudiments of a simple and therefore noble character, was wonderfully developed under this Greek girl's influence. He plainly saw within how narrow a segment of the world he hitherto had dwelt. Earine, who, between her own unparalleled experience and the influence of Vivian's wayward

genius, differed widely from all other women in the world, took kindly to this new agricultural pupil of hers, whose capacity she readily recognized.

The Mill Farm was quite revolutionized. Seldom now did Farmer Ashow get his four o'clock tea to the minute, or his evening stroll with Mary along the margin of the Avon. But the old boy was not on that account unhappy. Well had he loved Squire Redfern, and it gave him infinite satisfaction to have the Squire's friend under his roof, nursed by his daughter. And even on Farmer Ashow—tough as ash—Earine had rained influence. There's a poetic corner in every one of us. The farmer could not resist her, and soon gave up the attempt; and she implicitly taught him to understand something of John Grainger's good qualities, which he had hitherto disregarded.

I like John Grainger. There are so many men similarly situated, who have to enter the world unaccompanied, by some solitary wicket-gate. Most of them take the wrong path, and wander Heaven knows whither. Ah, the divine companionship of youth! These orphaned men, these men who are brotherless, sisterless, loveless, what wonder if they are misled into labyrinths which lead to discomfiture and misery?

Little Mary Ashow grew a trifle jealous about this time. She had regarded John Grainger as her own private property; she did not care about him, she thought, but he did care about her, and had no right whatever to care about any one else. But, she saw him taking every opportunity to talk with Earine, while that young lady assuredly did not discourage him. Indeed, they got on very well together. This slow John Grainger, a heavy Ajax among men, was not devoid of capacities unsuspected in him. There was some poetry beneath the crasser material of which he was built. But he did not know it before he met Earine. He had been digging in hard mathematical quarries, and searching for secrets in retort and crucible, unaware of that fairer region of poetry where the air is rich with odor of roses, and filled with the magic music of birds, while the virgin turf whereon you tread is exquisitely colored by a myriad flowers. The blond hair and watchet eyes and softly-rounded form of Mary Ashow had not taught him any thing of that mystic realm. But Earine might have been born there. Those marvellous sea-blue eyes of hers seemed to reflect divine and distant visions.

Nor was this all. Pretty little Mary was a charming capricious creature, intended by nature for a farmer's wife, after a few preliminary flirtations. To fulfill her destiny she needed no particular knowledge or thirst for knowledge, neither would the imaginative faculty be of serious service to her. So she possessed no such perplexing endowments. Otherwise was it with Earine, born in some "fairlyland forlorn," who had read Homer in Greek and Shakspeare in English with Vivian among the Cyclades. John

Grainger, full of mathematics and chemistry, had never read a word of Shakespeare. He had never been to a play. He had learned a little inaccurate Latin, and could construe Virgil with difficulty and a dictionary; but his Greek was absolutely nothing.

The impetuous youth, suddenly made aware of the wide realms of wisdom and beauty heretofore unknown to him, determined at once to explore them. He took to reading poetry, and neglected his science. He went right through Shakespeare at a gallop, and was greatly bewildered at the end thereof. Then he got a copy of Pope's "Homer," and read it strenuously, and marvelled how Earine could get out of it the poetic and picturesque visions which she seemed to find there. So he took it to his Grecian instructress, and asked her what it meant.

Very much perplexed was she. The Homer of Pope was not at all the Homer she had learned to love. Pope's clever couplets had no such music as the sonorous hexameter. I don't think blank verse can fairly render Homer. I can not wholly approve either Lord Derby or Mr. Ichabod Wright. If the reader who knows nothing of the old Greek desires to get a true idea of him from an English version, let him try Philip Stanhope Worsley in the Spenserian stanza. This is the most Homeric translation of Homer I know; and Professor Conington's part is useful as a foil. But we shall get the English hexameter in time, *pace* Dr. Spedding.

Earine had to teach John Grainger the difference between the Homer of Queen Anne's man and the Homer whom she had known in her girlhood, read in some such type as Browning's sculptor describes—

"My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type,  
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,  
To mark great places with due gratitude."

I wish I had the genius to tell how that delightful lesson was taught. May I leave it to your imagination, dear reader? The Greek girl's voice, like that of England's greatest poetess, was

"Somewhat low for al's and o's."

Yet John Grainger thought he had never heard such music as when Earine read him a bit of Homer in the modern Greek fashion, and made the young British farmer understand how men and women thought and spoke thirty centuries ago. Every body knows the grand sonnet of Keats on Chapman's "Homer." No watcher of the skies startled by a new planet—no wanderer through untraversed lands amazed by the apparition of an unknown ocean—could be more astonished than was John Grainger when he discovered Homer.

And then, Earine having "coached" him in Homer, he went back to Shakespeare, and read him in quite another fashion. Then he began to see the significance of England's life and thought wondrously explained by the greatest of poets in his immortal plays. Then he knew

the meaning of the word *Englishman*, as distinct from the word *man*; for no one knows what it is to be an Englishman until he has read Shakespeare. Homer was the key to Greece: Shakespeare is the key to England.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### TERESA THE TRAITRESS.

"Prima est ulcisci lex, altera vivere raptu,  
Tertia mentiri, quarta negare Deos."

THUS wrote Seneca of the island which produced the Bonapartes—which produced also Teresita the Traitor. His distich may be rather hard upon the majority of Corsicans; but it tersely and accurately describes certain exceptional characters among them, and notably the lady who was known at Broadoak Avon as Madame de Petigny Garnuchot. First revenge, then theft, then lying, then defiance of the Deity—these were main points of her charming character. M. Catelan had told quite accurately the earlier part of her history, while her career at the Rouen convent has reached us through Earine's adventures there. How she managed to win the confidence of the French police is immaterial. Perchance there was in certain quarters a liking for Corsicans.

Now she was to take her trial for murder in England, where the police encourage no fancies. However, I do not suppose she was greatly frightened. She had the possession of a great experience, and had been in worse positions previously. When her father branded her girlish shoulder, it was a greater terror and shame than any thing which since she had undergone. It was not likely that these too amiable English would do her any such harm as this.

The Assize was opened at Riverdale. There was a great excitement. The death by poison of Squire Redfern had caused a strong feeling of horror and amazement throughout the county. Every few days his four-in-hand or Lady Eva's pretty pony-carriage had been seen in the great market-place in Riverdale. And now he was murdered, and his wife, falsely accused, had died of a broken heart, and a vile female Papist and spy was to be tried for murdering him.

Such was the notion of the ordinary Riverdale public. Riverdale is a town much given to pugilism, but with a fine healthy hatred of the Papacy. And, as they hang people in the market-place there, and the Frenchwoman was quite certain to be hanged, there was a pleasant sensation through the place when the Assize was opened.

Madame de Petigny Garnuchot had quite a strong bar. Her counsel would tolerate nothing irrelevant; and so her youthful career in Corsica, and her subsequent achievements in Rouen, though doubtless the jury knew all about them, were carefully excluded from the case. And the judge summed up entirely in her favor; how could he do otherwise? She had

not been proved to possess any of the poison which killed Rupert Redfern; she had never entered his room, to the knowledge of any witness; and there was no conceivable reason why she should wish to kill him. She was honorably acquitted, of course, the judge summing up dead in her favor. She dined the very same evening at the house of the Lord-Lieutenant of the county.

I am sorry to say that the illogical public did not approve the verdict. They called the judge an old woman, and the jury a dozen donkeys. This, even if true, was inexcusably irreverent. But it was not true. At this period of my story, knowing more than the reader does, I feel sure that Madame de Petigny Garnuchot committed that murder; but I may be wrong. Anyhow, the Riverdale judge and jury were right. There was not a jot of circumstantial evidence against her. So, though the populace of that enlightened town were greatly disgusted, and got up a mild riot, and burnt the Pope and Madame Garnuchot in effigy in the marketplace, I don't quite see how Madame could have been hanged. That she deserved to be hanged was my opinion when I first met her. However, at present, she suffered a minor punishment—she only had to dine with the Lord-Lieutenant. It was the Earl of Tullochgorum, who sits in the House of Peers as Baron Whigmaleery. The Earl took the interesting Frenchwoman in to dinner.

How this came about I can not precisely explain; but certain it is that by some mysterious influence Madame de Petigny Garnuchot obtained some very valuable friends. She was received into quite the best society; newspapers which, before the trial, had (with careful avoidance of libel) built sensation articles upon her career, changed their tone entirely, and described her as an innocent sufferer by circumstantial evidence. But the populace of Riverdale, with Great British obstinacy, adhered to their first opinion, and indifferently abused the lady and the Pope, whom they regarded as her accomplice.

M. Achille Catelan, who had once been a Minister of France in days not imperial, was hereat intensely disgusted. He called on my Lord Tullochgorum, and frightened that excellent Whig peer from his propriety. The interview was not without humor. The Earl was a florid and portly gentleman, with a very decided opinion of his own importance; all his life he had voted with his party, and he was firmly convinced that he ought to have been a cabinet minister. However, all that he got by his loyalty to the said party was the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county; and this appointment gave him the more satisfaction because there were several resident nobles who had a much higher claim to it than he.

But, when Lord Tullochgorum and M. Catelan met in the Earl's drawing-room, you might have taken the latter for a prince and the former for a valet. Catelan had the unmistakable

air of distinction which belongs to a man who has mixed on equal terms with the greatest, who has ruled a nation and led a Parliament, whose name, in the very prime of his life, is already historic. When Lord Tullochgorum found that M. Catelan had called to remonstrate with him on his patronage of Madame Garnuchot, he naturally stood upon his dignity. No one had a right to dictate to him, he maintained, as to whom he should receive at his table.

"No one assumes such a right," said Catelan quietly. "At the same time a peer of England and Lord-Lieutenant of a county must surely be reluctant to extend hospitality to a felon. I know this woman's career from her childhood. She is simply infamous. To allow her to enter your house—a creature who has committed the vilest crimes, and who is employed in the infamous occupation of a spy—is to insult every one else whom you invite."

The Earl was very angry, so angry that he forgot the dignity which he spent his life in cherishing. The remonstrance had its effect, notwithstanding. Madame Garnuchot did not find herself received quite so warmly as heretofore, and Riverdale and its neighborhood soon lost sight of her altogether.

Such people as she are not, however, easily annihilated. Adventurous spirits, lovers of exciting enterprise, when they are disappointed in one career, they very quickly turn to another. It occurred to Madame that she should like to remain still in England; for, though the police of Paris had treated her with marvellous kindness, she had no especial wish to trust herself again within their reach. It also occurred to her that her next adventure had better be at some distance from Riverdale, and she naturally looked towards London. To that city of refuge fly men and women of all classes, more and more various than those whom the indiscriminate hospitality of Romulus attracted to the great asylum. Thither fled Madame in a first-class carriage by express train, and, arriving in the afternoon, she took up her quarters at the Colossus Hotel which, as every body knows, is close to the terminus. But the name which she gave to the obsequious "manageress" who received her was, for some reason, not that to which she had given lustre at Riverdale—it was Madame de Longueville.

Spies are always watched by spies. It is like Dean Swift's rhymes concerning creatures far less noxious:

"Fleas there are that live on men,  
Those fleas have other fleas again,  
Those lesser fleas have fleas that bite 'em,  
So fleas eat fleas *ad infinitum*."

Not unaware was Madame de Longueville of this law of her existence. On the platform of Riverdale her quick eye had glanced through the crowd, but noticed no one who looked as if he belonged to her own profession; and when her luggage was taken to the Colossus, no other passenger by the train came in the same direction. Still, Madame was far too well aware of

the skillful way in which such matters are managed, to be sure that she was unwatched. She would not have been very much annoyed at discovering that she was followed; but being somewhat uncertain what she would do next, she desired to be unfettered in her choice.

She ordered dinner at seven, in the ladies' coffee-room. Madame liked a nice little dinner, but did not care to eat it in solitude. She loved to observe human nature, and her extreme closeness of observation made her the most perfect of *mouchards*. Never did she forget any one whom she had seen for a moment; and her eye caught all the little unconscious tricks and habits—the turn of the head, perhaps, or the movement of the hand—which every body possesses. And, as is the case with all true lovers of their art, she practised it at all opportunities; she noted every creature in the coffee-room before the waiter had set on the snowy cloth the *salade d'anchois* and pint of Chablis wherewith she commenced her dainty dinner.

She spent the evening in the ladies' drawing-room—an institution borrowed from the United States, and so successful at the Colossus that it has brought that hotel a great number of American customers. The art of "keeping a hotel," as they say across the Atlantic, is not so well developed in London as in New York, but the Colossus would be hard to beat even in America. The drawing-room is perfect. It has its pianos, its port-folios, its lady-like games, its stereoscopes. Even Planchette is not forgotten. Sometimes a famous performer on the piano delights the guests. Sometimes an illustrious medium gives a *soirée*, and introduces them to the spiritual world. It is a marvellous saloon of flirtation, in which American ladies are singular adepts. It is also often a scene of sparkling discussion, when there crosses the ocean some apostle of a new faith—a pretty prophetess from the commonwealth of Free Love, or a lady in trowsers, urging the propriety of admitting her sex to Congress and to Parliament. Even on ordinary nights the room was a lively scene, as Madame de Longueville soon perceived.

One of her earliest acquaintances was the prettiest little American girl you ever saw in your life—an actress of nineteen, playing at a minor theatre in order to return to her own stage with the repute of having acted in London. Emily Sheldon was the most fascinating child in the world. Artless she seemed, having the supreme sort of concealing art; and she was absolutely heartless. She smiled so bewitchingly on every man that all the male sex loved her; but an expert could see that she would only marry a millionaire. She had the most exquisite faculty of dress: all American ladies of style dress as much better than Paris women as Parisians than the English. The Americans have a finer eye for color than we of the Old World—due, probably, to the profounder combinations of sky and water and foliage that Nature herself produces in America.

When you have seen the Catskills and the Hudson, you will understand why this little actress, Emily Sheldon, dressed in a style which no English duchess or French *cocodette* could equal.

Heartless people are always good-natured; hence Miss Emily was the first to commiserate Madame de Longueville's loneliness, and to enter into conversation with her. They exchanged confidences, the American prattling out all her little experiences and schemes, while the Corsican told a pathetic story that need not be repeated here, since no word of it was true. They got eminently friendly. They discovered that they were lodged on the same corridor—which was pleasant, since it is a custom with the ladies who visit the Colossus to take breakfast and tea and other slight refectations in each other's rooms, instead of journeying in the lift to the level of the coffee-room. Very pleasant little parties are thus made up, to which well-conducted visitors of the male sex are occasionally admitted. There is the little actress, or prophetess of Free Love, or trowsered proclaimer of sexual equality, in delightful dishabille, sitting on her bed, while her friends occupy such chairs as are to be found, and the masculine visitor is lucky if he can find a trunk on which to place himself and his cup of tea or tumbler of Champagne. More Champagne is, I think, consumed in these little chamber-meetings than would be drunk in the publicity of the ladies' coffee-room.

Madame de Longueville spent some little time at the Colossus. She had money in hand; was in no hurry to attack her next adventure, or to decide what it should be; liked the gayety of the place, after the quietude of English country life. One morning, she came in to breakfast in Miss Sheldon's room. The pretty Emily, being kept late at the theatre, usually breakfasted about twelve. Madame, who liked her bed, would have a cup of chocolate at nine, and then read a "scrofulous French novel" till it was time to get up and join her young friend.

"We shall have a visitor this morning, Louise!" exclaimed Miss Sheldon, who had but just left her bath, and looked as fresh as a summer rose with the morn dew upon it.

Madame de Longueville's name was Louise.

"Who is it, *petite*?" she asked.

"Oh, such a nice, grim old gentleman. He had not entered a theatre for years till last night. When he saw me, he was so struck by my likeness to somebody or other he knew years ago, that he coolly made his way behind the stage, though he didn't know a creature in the house, and insisted on making my acquaintance. He's an awful aristocrat, you must know, with lots of money, so of course he had his way. So we had a talk, and he asked to be allowed to come and see me, and I told him he might come to breakfast. He will be here in ten minutes, I expect."

"I had better not stay," said Madame.

"Oh yes, you must. I want somebody to

help me with the old gentleman. He is seventy, at least, but quite straight, and very tall; and he talks in the fine old polite way which young fellows don't understand. Dear me, what is his name? Stay, I've his card here somewhere. This is it."

She handed it to Madame, who read upon it:

*Sir Alured Vivian,*

*Venice.*

"Vivian!" she thought. "Why, it is the father of the man who found me out and persecuted me. I remember that strange name of baptism. I wonder if he knows about his son. He must, surely."

Madame, who always knew every thing, did not make allowance for British eccentricity. Sir Alured, who had been turned into a misogynist by the death of his wife, whom he loved, or thought he loved, had almost forgotten his son's existence. He had been living a lonely tranquil life for years in Venice, had no correspondents, and never looked into a newspaper. But he was a great lover of art, and he had come to London specially to look after a picture, said to be a veritable Titian, which somebody had on sale. He went straight to Claridge's, and the very first night of his stay in town he made Emily Sheldon's acquaintance. For he asked the waiter to recommend him a theatre, and the waiter, who had seen the little American, recommended *her* theatre; and Sir Alured, seeing, or fancying he saw, a wonderful similarity between her and the wife who had died when his son was a baby, made his way behind the stage, and found out Miss Emily.

A man of promptitude, you see. He forgot his Titian. He was, I think, a somewhat superstitious man, as are most who lead lonely lives. When he reached town he wondered why he had come so far to look after a picture which would probably turn out an imposture; but when he saw Emily Sheldon on the stage, the exact image of a creature he had loved long years ago, he believed that his coming to London was for a destined purpose.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

SIR ALURED VIVIAN.

"Odi et amo."

EMILY SHELDON had scarcely brushed her brown hair out of her bright eyes, and arrayed herself in fascinating *dishabille*, when the stately old baronet arrived. He brought her a bouquet, not of the average Covent Garden pattern, but evidently an artist's work; and right in the centre of it, cradled on the fragrant bosom of a miraculous rose, was a tiny hoop of gold with a ruby in it, just fitting her finger.

"Old men have one privilege," he said, "to atone for their many losses. They may admire beauty without being suspected of coveting it. They may ask the acceptance of a gift without being accused of bribery."

Emily did not quite understand all this; but she liked the flowers very much, and the ruby still more; and she gave the old Baronet one of her deliciously fascinating smiles (a smile of the sparkling eyes as well as of the pouting mouth), and she introduced her friend Madame de Longueville.

The latter lady played her part most discreetly, kept in the background, and watched with much interest the flirtation between the venerable baronet and the piquant little American. It soon became evident to her experienced eyes that Emily Sheldon might, if she would, befool this old gentleman into marrying her. That "extremes meet," is a favorite adage of mine; and it is singularly true when man's relation to woman is concerned. Love and Hate are the great twin brethren. They are very close to each other in the case of a man like Sir Alured Vivian—a man at heart a poet, though he hated the jingle of rhyme as Hotspur did—a man whose active strong imagination made him transform any woman whom he liked into a Miranda or a Rosalind, and who then would despise and detest her because she proved herself in the end a mere woman of the common sort. Sir Alured had carefully kept out of the way of womankind for thirty years; now, seeing by chance at a theatre a girl who resembled, or whom he imagined to resemble, the wife he had lost and almost forgotten, he came back like a moth to a candle, and was only too anxious to scorch his venerable wings.

Now, watching this and subsequent interviews between Sir Alured and Miss Sheldon, Madame de Longueville could not for some time decide whether she would play the part of *Marplot*. It occurred to her that, if Sir Alured were informed of the present state and circumstances of his son, he would probably leave his enchantress and look after Valentine. From sheer love of mischief, and envy of a delightfully pretty girl who had a good chance of marrying a gentleman of wealth, she had a strong inclination to interfere.

One secret spring of Madame's wickedness was envy. In the days of her usurped sway at Rouen, she delighted to humiliate and scourge the girls who were noticeable for beauty and gayety. Herself conscious of incurable defects, physical and moral, she hated those who had not such defects. This was the secret of her pitiless persecution of Earine.

It may seem strange that no news of his son had by any accident reached Sir Alured; but his absence from England, few people knew where, had been so long that he was pretty well forgotten. He read neither letters nor journals. His son, who liked to be independent, had no communication with his father. Valentine Vivian's ample allowance was paid regularly at

Coutts's, and he was in possession of his mother's property, so that there were no material ties to bind him to the head of the family.

Among the various ways in which a father may manage his son, letting him entirely alone is not entirely the worst. I do not say it had wholly succeeded with Valentine Vivian, but even that young gentleman might perchance have been worse.

Madame de Longueville at length decided that she would leave matters to go as they would. She found herself pleasantly situated as friendly chaperon to Miss Sheldon. That young person had an official duenna, of course: a hideous scraggy elderly vulgar female Yankee—a Yahoo of the *coulisses*—whom she took excellent care that Sir Alured never saw.

But Madame looked like a lady; she was irreproachable in dress and manner; she was the very person to play propriety at Greenwich or Richmond. And as she got nice little drives and dinners, and occasionally pretty presents from the amorous Sir Alured, she lived in clover. She enjoyed a row on the Thames much, a subsequent dinner at the Star and Garter more.

She had not, in the interval, forgotten her own future affairs. What she should do, in order to remain independent of the Paris police, liberal paymasters but rigorous taskmasters, she could not at once decide. Looking one day, when her little American friend was at rehearsal, through the advertising columns of the "Times," she saw a most subtly-worded notice from a Professor Sancey, stating that he had a great number of ladies' schools to transfer on easy terms. She determined to call on Professor Sancey. The Colossus Hotel was, as may be imagined, great in broughams. So she ordered out an elegant equipage of this species, and drove to the rather dingy street in which he dwelt. It was a Soho style of street, with no end of upholsterers and music-sellers; while the higher stories of the tall dreary houses were occupied to a great extent by artists and photographers. In an office on a first floor, comfortably furnished, she found the Professor [of what, Heaven knows!]  
—a little man ridiculously like a ferret.

He was profoundly polite. Madame stated that she had seen his advertisement; and that having had some experience in education (at Rouen!) and being disposed to settle in England, she should be glad of information as to what he could offer her.

Seeing that she was what is usually known as a woman of business, this Sancey went straight to the point. He was a vulgar fellow, originally a grocer's assistant, then an usher in a small school, then a dissenting preacher, finally what is called a school agent. In this last branch of business he was thought unrivalled. He was a perfect go-between. He introduced unqualified teachers to miserly employers. He sold schools that were insolvent to insolvent purchasers. He got his percentage on both hands, and cared nothing at all what might happen afterwards.

Madame de Longueville examined what he had to offer, and her opinion was for a long time divided between two "eligible opportunities." One was a ladies' school at Brighton; the other in the neighborhood of the Crystal Palace: both were expensive and exclusive, and seemed promising. It was hard to determine; but Madame at last resolved upon Sydenham, because there appeared to be a pleasant house with ample grounds, while the Brighton seminary was in a street. True, there is the sea at Brighton; but few French people really care for the sea. Madame de Longueville did not.

Professor Sancey did not hugely swindle her; and for the best reason in the world—he did not get a chance. Indeed, this woman of the world let him know that it would be worth his while to let her have the best of the bargain. She had ready-money; but she was not going to pay all that these people asked, or all at once. The consequence was that the Professor, taking part with the cleverer of his two clients, sold her this Sydenham school which she fancied on remarkably easy terms.

The English system, which requires a lawyer or a doctor to prove some amount of character and knowledge, while it allows any body who likes to set up as schoolmaster or schoolmistress, is simply abominable. Here was this French felon, this accomplished spy, this woman suspected of murder, placed without difficulty at the head of a school whose pupils were girls of really good position. The girls were sold and bought. How English parents can be such stupendous idiots as to tolerate arrangements like these is beyond my conception. I would rather have a child of mine altogether unttaught, than taught by ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who profess to teach in England.

Madame de Longueville's prospectus was perfect. It was a real work of art—the art of the charlatan, which is often more rapidly successful than the true and lofty style. Madame herself was described as at once the most brilliant and the most respectable of women; she had references of the rarest kind, beginning with an Emperor and Empress. Parents of possible pupils would of course find, on application, that Madame was appreciated at the Tuileries. Then Madame's system of tuition was entirely new; she went in for hygiene and calisthenics; she would not allow her pupils to work too hard, but would at the same time teach them at least twice as much as any one else could teach. And then her lessons in etiquette, in aristocratic demeanor, in the manner of courts! Herself accustomed to the stately atmosphere of courts imperial and royal, Madame de Longueville—the very preposition to whose name indicated aristocracy—was singularly qualified to give to English young ladies of position that final touch, as to manner and bearing, which produces perfection. So at least said the prospectus of Teba House, Sydenham, where Madame was about to open her educational campaign.

This excellent instructress of feminine youth



matured her plans, and pondered over her prospectus during the intervals of her intercourse with Sir Alured Vivian and Emily Sheldon, whose companion she had become whenever the lovers went out together. Sir Alured had lost his head, if not his heart, to the bewitching little American. He was ready to marry her at any moment. She, on the other hand, could not quite make up her mind. The baronet was very rich, but then he was very old—seventy, perhaps—an age which no sensible man deems young. Still, Sir Alured's age was not the main difficulty with Miss Emily—who, to do justice to her common sense, thought it in some respects a recommendation. She could not help thinking what a charming widow she would make, with a nice jointure of a good many thousands a year. Wouldn't young and beautiful Lady Vivian gather admirers round her? Wouldn't she enjoy life in London if she should ever become her own mistress in this fortunate fashion? Such was her maiden meditation: but she was loath to take the first step towards it. She couldn't be Sir Alured's widow without being first his wife; and, as she grew acquainted with the old gentleman, she noticed in him a certain keenness of insight and sternness of temper, which slightly checked her ambition to fill that enviable place.

Not to her did he exhibit those qualities, for he was in far too amorous a condition; but Miss Sheldon, not being herself blinded by love, studied his conduct towards other people whom they happened to encounter, and felt very doubtful whether Sir Alured, the most obsequious and obedient of lovers, would be quite manageable if transformed into a husband.

It isn't every young lady who is as prudent as Emily Sheldon. Nine out of ten make up their minds that man before marriage and man after marriage is the same creature. Never was greater mistake. Marriage is a new birth. It reveals a marvellous mystery. It changes women much, but men more.

This is not a metaphysical treatise, but a novel—or, to speak more strictly, a romance—else would I assuredly explain the reason of these mysteries. The explanation will be found in the eleventh volume of my great work on "Physics and Metaphysics"—as yet unwritten. I am the author of more unwritten works than any man since Coleridge.

The little American accepted Sir Alured's presents and his dinners, yet carefully kept him from the final proposal which she knew must come. However, at length it came. They had dined together, of course in company with the excellent Madame de Longueville, at a hostelry on the Thames, where the stewed eels and the Madeira are perfect. The old baronet was resolved to learn his fate: he doubted a little what the reply might be, though his keen old brain in its lucid intervals perceived that Emily Sheldon was not exactly the girl to refuse wealth and early widowhood.

They had dined. They were walking togeth-

er up and down a terrace, whose stone parapet was covered with clematis, passion-flower, honeysuckle, while beneath it lay a sinuous stretch of Thames, whereon the swans floated like living snow-wreaths in the summer moonlight.

Madame de Longueville, wisest of women, had sauntered on.

Tall gray Sir Alured Vivian was looking down on the exquisite face, fresh and fragrant as a bouquet of roses, of the American actress, and trying to choose the best words in which to make a fool of himself. He chose them at last. I will not record them, lest some other elderly gentleman should borrow them for a like purpose.

It was just at a corner of the terrace that Sir Alured murmured his question.

The little beauty whispered,

"Yes!"

She had been expecting the question all day, and all day had resolutely decided to say "No." But the dinner, the *Clicquot*, the song of the nightingales, the moonlight, the concentrated enjoyment of the evening, caused her to break her resolve.

I don't think she was sorry. When two courses of action are open to you, and you decide after careful reflection upon one of them, and Providence (or whatever you please to call it) makes you select the other, are you not rather thankful?

It seems as if some superior power had taken the matter in hand, releasing you from your responsibility.

Emily Sheldon answered affirmatively, at any rate. The old baronet held her little soft plump hands in one of his, gaunt and long-fingered, and looked very lovingly into her eyes.

While this pretty piece of wooing was in progress, Achille Catelan came rapidly along the terrace, in search of Sir Alured, whom he had known in Italy. Dining at the same place, Catelan had accidentally heard that his old friend was there also. At once he went to look for him, being eager to meet him for more than one reason. As he strode rapidly across the garden, he saw in the bright moonlight the face of Madame de Longueville, and shuddered as if he had seen some venomous reptile.

She also saw him, and turned deadly pale for a moment, and then smiled at her own terror. What harm could he do her? However, she followed him, quietly: saw that he was keenly and eagerly looking for some one; saw him at last draw up where Sir Alured Vivian and the little American were standing together.

"Vivian," said the Frenchman, touching his friend lightly on the arm.

Sir Alured was surprised for a moment.

"Ah, my dear Catelan," he said presently. "I did not know you were in England. I am astonished to find myself in this wretched country."

"Listen," said the Frenchman, in a low whisper: "your son—you have not seen him for years—is terribly ill—mad, or something like it. You have not heard of this. It is a bore,

I know," he proceeded, in a lighter fashion, "to have sons and daughters to look after; but still, in the opinion of the world, something of this sort must be done."

"Thank you, Catelan. Come to my room and take some coffee, and tell me where I shall find the poor boy. Val's a good fellow, though he is my son."

Sir Alured had always been remarkable as the most forgetful man in Europe. It was said that he forgot his own marriage-day, and was just getting into flannel for a cricket-match when his groomsmen came to look for him. At any rate, seeing his old acquaintance, Catelan, and hearing something of his son, he wholly forgot that he had just made a proposal of marriage (accepted) to Emily Sheldon.

He strode rapidly back towards the room in which they had dined, Catelan keeping close to him, as if he were playing Mephistopheles to an elderly Faust. Emily Sheldon, whom Catelan had scarcely noticed, tried at first to keep up with them, but soon dropped behind. Farther behind still was Madame de Longueville. She saw there was some momentous question in hand; she longed to join in the council; but she dared not face Catelan. So I must at present leave her waiting placidly and patiently to see what may happen next.

"It is a tragical sort of story I have to tell you," said Catelan, as the two gentlemen stood together at the window. "Redfern, you know, who married your niece, was a great friend of mine."

"Yes," said Sir Alured. "He made your acquaintance when he was travelling—just after he left Oxford, I fancy."

"He did. The poor fellow is dead—poisoned."

"My God! by whom?"

"I saw the woman who was tried for it and acquitted in the garden here to night. There was no evidence against her, but I believe she did it."

"Go on," said Sir Alured.

"Your niece, poor Lady Eva, was also suspected; but the poor child died before the trial—of a broken heart, they say."

"What a series of horrors! And you haven't come to Valentine yet."

"He was with Lady Eva when she died, and the shock was so great that he sank into a strange stupor, from which the physicians can not rouse him."

"I will go to him. Where is he?"

"In very comfortable quarters—at the Broad-oak Mill Farm, nursed by the farmer's daughter and another young lady, who seems to have some mysterious connection with him."

"Mysterious connection!" exclaimed the old man. "Small mystery in harlotry."

"No," said Catelan, "I don't think that of the girl. She had an innocent face?"

"Fshaw! any woman can look innocent. I'll take my boy away from these women, and nurse him myself. Innocent! Why, Catelan,

old fool that I am, I have to-night been betrayed into asking a girl with an innocent face to marry me—and she has accepted."

"Ah! I noticed there was a lady with you. Well, I hope you may be happy."

"You don't think I'll do it? No. God sent you to stop me. Here's Redfern murdered by one woman, and poor Val in the clutches of two others: isn't that enough mischief for them to do in one family?"

"But what can you do? The lady has your word?"

"Pooh! Honor does not bind one with women: they keep no terms with us. Their vows are written in water. I'll give her some money; she'll be quite satisfied."

"How," asked Catelan, "could you think of marrying a person of whom you had such an opinion?"

"My dear friend, I hadn't. I was mad. I was in a devilish delusion, and your news has brought me to my senses, thank God! How soon can I start for Broadoak?"

"There's a train at midnight. We can catch it if we go off at once. What will you do about the lady?"

"Oh, she can take care of herself. She has a friend with her. There they are, you see."

Emily Sheldon and Madame were on the terrace, not far from the window at which they were standing. Their faces were visible in the moonlight.

"Nom de Dieu!" cried Catelan, startled into an unaccustomed oath, "why, that's the woman—the one in black—who was tried for murdering Redfern. She's a thief and a spy."

"Ah, you see!" said Sir Alured. "You were in time, were you not? The other is as bad, no doubt. Let us go at once. If I see that girl again, I shall murder her."

Catelan, seeing the old man's excited state, took him away at once. The front entrance of the hotel was but a few yards from the station. They were in London in twenty minutes, and at midnight they started for Broadoak, Catelan determining to look after his friend as long as seemed requisite.

## CHAPTER XXV.

POOR BLOGG.

"Obedient Yamen  
Answered, *Amen*,  
And did  
As he was bid."

EMILY SHELDON, it must be admitted, was rather ill-treated. After much hesitation, after a charming little dinner, amid surroundings of moonlight on the Thames, and honeysuckle on the terrace, and nightingales in the dusky copses, she had made up her mind to marry an aristocrat of seventy. When she whispered by the clematis-clustered pilaster that *Yes* which she meant to have been *No*, she looked upon herself as already Lady Vivian. While the amorous old baronet was looking into her bright eyes,

and flattering himself that he saw love in their lucid depths, she was thinking how she would set the fashion when she became a widow—thinking how she would have garden-parties and *déjeûners dinatoires*, and eclipse Miss Countts and Lady Waldegrave, and flirt with every body and marry nobody.

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip. Just at this supreme moment, when the beautiful little American was conjuring up a vision of herself as the queen of London gayety, a sudden stranger interrupted the erotic interview, and Sir Alured walked away from her as if her existence were forgotten—as, for the moment, it was.

She followed, as I have already said, her fugitive lover; but he walked on with such energetic rapidity that she was obliged to fall behind. So she sauntered along the terrace as if indifferent to every thing. She was not in the best of tempers; who would be under such circumstances? She walked towards the hotel at a leisurely pace, saw Sir Alured and his friend enter it, and, just as they had done so, was joined by Madame de Longueville. That lady had been watching the little comedy, but was quite unable to understand it. When she joined her friend, she expressed surprise that she was alone.

"Why, Emily!" she exclaimed, "I did not expect to see you deserted! Where is Sir Alured?"

Emily was a capital little actress, both on and off the stage; but this situation had been rather too much for her. There was a tearful rage in her eyes. Madame could see that she was desperately indignant.

"Why, what is the matter, child?" she went on to ask. "You don't seem pleased. Has Sir Alured offended you?"

Miss Sheldon was silent for a while, and then grew eloquent. She broke out vivaciously, in the high Yankee style, abusing Sir Alured, the English aristocracy, the queen, the country, and all else that she could possibly connect with her disappointment. Madame de Longueville calmed her after a time, and obtained from her a pretty clear account of what had occurred. The incident, though an enigma to the little American, was intelligible enough to Madame. She perceived that Catelan had come to tell Sir Alured precisely what she herself had thought of telling him. She began to wish that she had anticipated the revelation, for mere mischief's sake.

"It is some one who has brought important news," said Madame, quietly: "his secretary, perhaps, or the manager of his affairs. These rich English noblemen have always immense affairs to attend to."

"Well," said Emily, "they are gone up to our room, I suppose. I shall go in to them."

"I would not," said Madame, who had no inclination to see Catelan again. "It would seem as if you mistrusted Sir Alured. He has gone in a hurry to settle his business with this man and come back to you. He will expect to

find you here on the terrace. I should stay till he comes down again, if I were you."

Emily acquiesced. It was thus they were conversing when the two gentlemen saw them at the window.

Well, they strolled up and down for half an hour or more. The evening grew cool, as summer evenings will. Emily Sheldon grew restless, as young ladies will; so restless at last that she said to her calmer companion, "Come, I have waited long enough. Let us go in."

Madame de Longueville assented, having a conviction that the birds would be flown. Flown they were: the most courteous of head waiters had been instructed to hope that the ladies would forgive Sir Alured Vivian, who had been summoned away to a friend that was dangerously ill, and had not time to take leave before catching the train. This was Catelan's notion: Sir Alured had been in no mood for apologies. Would the ladies take any thing? the waiter went on to suggest. Orders were left for any thing they would like.

"Bring a bottle of Heidseck," said Miss Sheldon, thirsty with anger. "Plenty of ice, mind."

Then she flung herself back into an easy-chair and restlessly tapped the carpet with her pretty little feet.

The wine came. The waiter was dismissed.

"I wonder what this means," said Miss Sheldon. "Do you think it was merely sudden business?"

"Well," replied Madame, "I can not say. It was very abrupt; but you know Englishmen—and especially great gentlemen—are abrupt. You know best whether Sir Vivian had any cause to leave you."

"Cause!" she exclaimed. "Why, he had just asked me to marry him, and I—little fool that I am—had said yes."

"Perhaps," said Madame, provokingly, "if you had said no, he would not have run away. You should never be in a hurry to say yes."

"I wish I had said no," exclaimed the actress. "I quite meant to. Why should I marry a man old enough to be my grandfather?"

"Because he is noble and rich, my dear," replied the Corsican. "You would be a charming Lady Vivian. No matter. He will come back; or, if he comes not back, you will threaten him with law, and make him pay much money. This wine refreshes. Shall we inquire about the train to town?"

They returned together to London, and to the Colossus Hotel. They talked but little on their way. Madame de Longueville was very ready to talk, but Miss Sheldon was decidedly indisposed to listen, and made snappish answers to her friend's remarks.

Thus they got back to their hotel, and went up in the lift, with half a dozen other people, who had been pleasantly dissipating the summer night, and (after of course kissing each other with effusion) went off to their respective bed-chambers.

Ah, is it wrong, is it indecorous, to use the romancer's fern-seed and invisibly enter those chambers? Will they say their prayers, these two women? Will they, enveloped in the linen robes of sleep, kneel by their bedsides, and address reverent words to God?

Will they not? Madame de Longueville was a most pious Catholic. She made her devotions earnestly and lengthily. She repeated many prayers to the Virgin and her favorite saints, and counted her rosary, and crossed herself many times.

The little actress was of a newer faith. She was a Beecherite, in her own country. She knelt down and said her prayers, and I hope was a trifle the better for it.

So the two ladies are now to be imagined in their bedrooms, and in their beds, on opposite sides of the same corridor of the Colossus. They could not sleep. How could they?

Emily Sheldon was speculating as to whether she should ever be Lady Vivian. Could she if she would? Would she if she could? It would be a great position; but she was a little afraid of Sir Alured. And his sudden mysterious departure, without saying a word to her, was very perplexing. Such habits are even more awkward in a husband than in a lover.

Madame de Longueville, between her sheets, was meditating on the same topic. But, having more information than her little friend, she immediately decided that Sir Alured's madness was over. She knew that Catelan must have come to tell him of his son's illness: she felt sure that this would so occupy him that he would have no thought to spare to the frivolous little Emily. The question was whether Madame should not counsel Emily to prosecute him, and to get money out of him, whereof a portion might go to the accomplished representative of the De Longueville family.

On the very next day, Madame had engaged to go down and take possession of the Sydenham Seminary. Of this Emily Sheldon was aware, as her friend had confided to her all about her scholastic enterprise. When morning came (by which I mean about 11 30 A.M.), Madame threw on her *peignoir*, and tapped at the chamber-door of the little actress. The little actress could afford to sleep late, for her first engagement had terminated, and her views upon Sir Alured Vivian had deterred her from making a second.

"Will you come down to Sydenham with me to-day, Emily?" said Madame.

"I don't know," she answered, somewhat sulkily. "I suppose I may as well. There's nothing else to do."

"You can not well hear from Sir Alured till to-morrow," said the Corsican. "It will be all right then, no doubt. In the mean time, as you have nothing to do, you may as well come and see this place which I have taken."

Miss Sheldon assented. They breakfasted, and then started for Sydenham. It was the day before the young ladies were to arrive.

The previous head governess, or female lieutenant, or whatever you choose to call the person who helps to keep a ladies' private school, was already in possession. She was recommended as perfect in her position. A glance at her would cause you to recognize that perfection. She was dumpy, short-haired, short-nosed; she had broad hands and feet, and columnar legs, and a spotty complexion; she professed to have the temper of an angel; she had the temper of a Tartar—the real cream of tartar of Crim Tartary. One thing this young lady had which is well worth having—a prodigious plausibility. Women fell in love with her at first sight; I am bound to say that men (unless they were curates, perpetual or otherwise) seldom made that mistake. But she suited curates, for she liked Sunday-school teaching, singing in a choir, decorating a church at Easter or Christmas. She was very dull, this Miss Blogg, yet often contrived to manage people far cleverer than herself.

She would have some slight difficulty in managing Madame de Longueville, you will easily guess. Yet she tried the experiment—much to Madame's delight. On this first day of meeting, it was perceived that Miss Blogg had been pretty nearly the sole manager of the establishment. She took Madame de Longueville's ignorance for granted, greatly amusing her by her dignified style of explanation. The truth was that the former proprietress of the school—a very excellent person for the position—had suffered ill health for a long time before she retired; during that period Miss Blogg had managed every thing, and had quite come to act as mistress of the place.

Herewith the mischievous heart of Madame de Longueville was delighted. She looked forward to the wicked amusement of deposing and humiliating the unfortunate Blogg. Listening attentively to all which that young person said, she betrayed no part of her wicked intention; and Miss Blogg was impressed with the notion that she had quite fascinated her future employer, and would easily be able to manage her.

Miss Sheldon was charmed with her friend's new quarters. They had a cup of tea together, as is the manner of women, before the actress returned to town.

"I shall find this rather dull after the Colossus," said Madame. "I shall often envy you your gay evenings in the drawing-room."

"Oh, but this is so quiet and pleasant. I wish I could get into such a happy retreat, out of the way of the world."

"No you don't, child. You may think so, but it is all nonsense at your time of life. You want gayety and pleasure, not a dreary solitude like this. Wait till you are Lady Vivian, and then you will pity me in this dull Sydenham house, with a lot of little girls to teach, and nobody but Miss Blogg to talk to."

Emily Sheldon laughed at the pitiful prospect.

"I shall never be Lady Vivian," she said.

"But I will come down and see you now and then, so that you may talk to somebody besides Miss Blogg."

"Don't be offended, Emily," said Madame, "but I think you had better not come to see me. These English people are dreadfully squeamish. Some of the girls may have seen you at the theatre; and if that were the case, and they told their parents, I should soon lose all my pupils. English people consider all actresses wicked. They would think it perfectly awful for a school-mistress to be acquainted with an actress."

"What fools!"

"Yes, but it is true. I will come and look in upon you at the Colossus now and then; and when there are holidays, if you are not Lady Vivian, or perhaps a Countess, you can come down and stay as long as you please. But now I am a school-mistress, you know; I must behave with dreadful propriety."

"I dare say you are quite right," replied Miss Sheldon. "Don't be too proper, for goodness sake! Of course you will go to church twice on Sundays, and take your little flock of lambs with you."

"Of course I must," said Madame, who, though a sincere Catholic, had made up her mind to play Protestant for the present. "It will be dull work, but one must do one's duty."

Miss Sheldon returned to town, wondering whether she was ever again to see Sir Alured Vivian. Madame de Longueville, left alone, examined carefully her new domain, and was, on the whole, well satisfied. The late proprietor was a lady: her arrangements were tasteful and orderly. There was nothing shabby or stingy about the place: all was suitable to the high terms which it had been the custom to charge.

Madame found this first evening very dull by contrast with the Colossus drawing-room. Miss Blogg took up a position at the table, and devoted herself to needlework, at the same time doing her uttermost to amuse her new employer by edifying conversation.

She knew all the gossip of the neighborhood, being particularly intimate with a rather humorous old maid who kept a small shop, which was the centre of the village scandal. To that emporium of tea and coffee, of tracts and sweetmeats, came all the lads and lasses of the vicinity; and Miss Blogg's highest delight, when she had a little leisure, was to slip over to Miss Tattleton's and hear all the local news. The two got on very well together; but I must say for Miss Tattleton that she had far more sense and a far better temper than Miss Blogg.

Madame de Longueville leaned back in her *cauaise*, and listened with some amusement to Miss Blogg's *causeries*, and heard all about the curate and his wife, and the landlord of the hotel, and the doctor who couldn't pay his butcher's bill, and the quarrel about the water of a brook, and Miss Tattleton's cats and doves, and much more of the like sort.

She listened with a quiet smile. This was Miss Blogg's last monologue. To-morrow that young person would be reduced to her proper position. Meanwhile, Madame was so courteous and affable that Miss Blogg went off to bed at about eleven o'clock in a highly elated state of mind.

"Parbleu!" said Madame de Longueville to herself when left alone, "that young woman is very ugly and stupid and tiresome. It is the last evening she shall pass with me. And her village grocer's stories! And her silly gossip about low people! Oh, we will soon stop all that, my good Blogg. I shall astonish you to-morrow."

After which soliloquy Madame found her way to her chamber, an airy well-furnished room, and smoked a solitary cigarette before going to bed.

Next day began the arrival of pupils. They were quite little girls, for the most part, of ages varying from eight to twelve, curled darlings of the aristocracy, dainty little beauties daintily dressed. Their fond mothers brought them in brougham and barouche and pony-carriage; and oh, with what fascinating perfection of manner did Madame de Longueville receive them! They were charmed. This was the true courtly style. This was precisely the kind of person they wanted for their daughters. Not a single visitor but thought Madame de Longueville delightful.

There were rather more than a dozen pupils. Of course masters (professors, if you please) attended to give lessons in various accomplishments. Besides the elegant and erudite Miss Blogg, there was one other resident instructress—what they call an "articled pupil." She was a tall bony red-haired young person of eighteen, by name Margaret Maitland, whom Miss Blogg kept under very resolutely. Yet Miss Maitland, though not pretty to look at, possessed one fine quality—an indomitable thirst for knowledge. She worked with hearty good will to teach the young folk at Teba House, and in her few leisure moments she tried hard to teach herself. She submitted to Miss Blogg without a murmur, and obeyed orders without a question.

When the girls were assembled, and their parents had departed, Miss Blogg prepared to take the command as had been her custom.

"Now, young ladies," she said, in a harsh commanding voice, "you had better come with me to the school-room."

The said school-room, I should remark, was a large and lofty room, comfortably carpeted and furnished, with quite a home look about it. Shelves filled with books surrounded it on all sides. There were the inevitable globes, of course; why girls should learn the "use of the globes," which no boy has learnt since the Conquest, is as inexplicable as why every female creature is compelled to waste many hours daily of her youth in practising on the piano, whether or not she has any love or capacity for music. When will English people learn that

men don't choose their wives for music, and that the piano is not a musical instrument, any more than the hurdygurdy or the accordeon?

I digress. Let us hear Madame's reply to Miss Blogg's word of command.

"No, Blogg" (she positively dropped the *Miss*!), "I don't think the children need go to the school-room just now. I have had some strawberries and cream sent in; tell the servants to put table out on the lawn, under those trees. Holidays are not quite over yet."

The little girls were delighted to hear such words of grace. The Blogg was amazed and horrified, but obeyed orders.

"Come, children," said Madame, "let us go out upon the lawn."

Gayly they trooped out, these merry little maidens, and danced over the grass to where preparation was making for their banquet. Strawberries—the real British Queen—were piled up in great china bowls; and the cream of Devonshire, from a certain famous shop in the Strand, accompanied them. How joyously they took up their position! It was a sultry summer day, but there was shade of leafy elms, and the cool fragrant fruit and snowy cream were delicious to the children's youthful palate.

"Now, Blogg," said Madame, "you and Maitland wait on the little ladies, and see that they are happy."

Great fun was this to Madame de Longueville. She could see that the children were all afraid of Miss Blogg; she could also see that Miss Blogg was in a state of frightful indignation. She herself walked round the tables, talking to each little girl in her turn, and encouraging them to prattle.

Miss Blogg was horrified at the frightful innovation. She had been accustomed to box the children's ears when they ventured to talk to her.

I must enter into a little more detail of this eventful day. It had been the custom, Miss Blogg informed her superior, for prayers to be read, and supper given to the girls at eight o'clock. Madame signified approval. She read prayers herself, and then the servants brought into the room a dish of enormously thick bread-and-butter, which refectory was accompanied by cold water only. Madame was indignant.

"Take that away!" she exclaimed. "Blogg, go and have some thin bread-and-butter cut, and see if there is no milk to be had. That is not a proper supper for young ladies."

So the little folk had thin slices and mugs of new milk, and were taken to their dormitories by Miss Blogg and her subordinate.

Ten minutes later, Madame went up stairs. Miss Blogg was hurrying the little girls into bed rather roughly. She was not in a perfectly amiable temper, and showed it by scolding one child for being slow, and patting another for being untidy. Madame de Longueville stood unobserved at the door of the dormitory, highly amused. Then she suddenly said:

"Blogg, I can not permit you to strike the young ladies. If they require punishment, refer to me. Instead of hurrying them in this absurd way, you should assist them to undress. You do not seem to understand your duties."

Poor Blogg!

Madame presently retired to her drawing-room, dropped into her easy-chair, took up a French novel, and expected Miss Blogg's advent. That young lady soon arrived, bringing a huge work-basket, and was about to take her seat at the table.

"Where is Maitland?" asked Madame.

"She goes to bed at nine," said Miss Blogg.

"Ah, it is just nine, I see," said Madame, looking at a watch not much larger than a shilling. "I think you had better do the same, Blogg. I wish you to go to bed early, that you may be up in good time, and help the children to dress. Just ring the bell before you go: I want to order supper."

Poor Blogg! She did as she was told, and retreated; yet not so soon but that she heard Madame give orders about a *pâté des foies gras* and a bottle of claret.

When Miss Blogg said her prayers that night, I fear she did not pray heartily for her new mistress. I may be wrong, as she was a professedly pious party.

Now for the next morning. The children were supposed to rise at seven, the breakfast hour being eight. Madame was in the dormitories a few minutes after seven, and found Miss Maitland there.

"Where is Blogg?" she asked. "Go and fetch her. I wish her always to be here when the young ladies are dressing."

With such exquisite minuteness of cruelty did Madame pursue the unhappy Miss Blogg. In the school-room she was just as hard upon her. She requested her to give her usual lessons, and listened as she gave them, and audibly criticised.

"I don't think you have much teaching capacity, Blogg," she said. "Maitland appears to me much better fitted for the business than you are. You made several mistakes in that grammar lesson. You had better confine yourself to waiting on the young ladies, and taking care of them. I wish them well attended to in all respects; and you may make yourself very useful in that way."

At a later hour in the day poor Miss Blogg slipped out of the back gate, to pay her usual visit to Miss Tattleton, who was of course intensely eager to know all that was to be known about Madame de Longueville. Miss Blogg did not disclose all her troubles to her friend, yet told enough to make that lady open her eyes very wide, and lift her hands in amazement.

When the truant governess returned, she was met at the very door by Madame.

"Where have you been, Blogg?" she asked.

"Only over to Miss Tattleton's, ma'am."

"Be so kind as never to go out unless by my permission. And I strongly disapprove of your

going to Miss Tattleton's. She is evidently poor to objectionable gossip."

Poor Blogg!

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FATHER AND SON.

"Eumenides! . . .  
Huc, huc adventate!"

JOHN GRAINGER, huge and ungainly as ever, but with a brain which intercourse with Earine had developed and widened, was leaning over the wicket-gate of the old-fashioned garden at Broadoak Mill Farm in the July evening. There were saffron streaks in the west; the last bees were leaving the limes; chryseis and mesembryanthemum, lovers of the noontide, had closed their radiant petals. They had been carting hay that day from Farmer Ashow's wide meadows on the Avon side, and John Grainger had done the work of three men at the least. But he was not tired: no amount of work, mental or physical, could fatigue John Grainger. He was just in that state of happy lassitude which a strong man feels after a long day's stout work—just, in fact, as Odysseus would have felt after winning the famous ploughing match to which he challenged Eurymachos. The smell of the hay, now built up into mighty ricks, was very sweet in the evening air; the moon was bright in the west; and there was a drowsy twitter of birds in the dense foliage.

Under the great mulberry-tree in the middle of the garden, Earine and Mary Ashow, dressed in some slight material, were taking their evening stroll.

Earine was very unhappy, yet bore her sorrow with a noble patience. This patience was born of faith. Though Valentine Vivian was sunk into a strange slumber, and could not recognize her—though the sole words he uttered showed that his brain was filled with a vision of his dead cousin—yet did Earine firmly believe that he would recover and be himself again. For this belief she could assign to herself no reason, but she held to it with tenacity; and so she endured her misery and tended Vivian and lived in hope—determined never again to leave him.

Alas for the strength of human determination! Even now Vivian's father was rapidly approaching, resolved to separate his son from all feminine companionship. Even now there is a fly at the gate, which John Grainger is courteously opening to Sir Alured Vivian and M. Catelan.

The latter gentleman explained to the young ladies the purport of their coming. Tall Sir Alured, hastily crushing the gravel with his advancing foot, deigns scarcely to glance at them, and says abruptly,

"Bring me to my son."

Earine tries to think herself glad that the father has arrived, and yet feels jealous of him. Vivian seemed all her own till now.

Vivian, when his father entered his chamber,

was sitting in an easy-chair by the window, looking towards the west. His perfectly whitened hair gave him a weird appearance, and there was no meaning or intelligence in those eyes once so keen.

Sir Alured started back at the first sight of his son.

"I have done this, Catelan," he whispered.

"We have been a wild race, and God means to end us."

"Take heart," said the Frenchman. "There is nothing past cure. This is a simple case of catalepsy produced by a shock; another shock at any time may terminate it. I have a friend in Paris, Dr. Chicard, who has studied such cases carefully, and had much success with them. We will have him over."

"I will try any thing. But first I will take the boy away from these women. Send for his doctor, Catelan, and let him tell us if it is safe to remove him."

Seeing his old friend's obstinate humor, M. Catelan did not attempt to argue with him on the absurdity of taking Valentine away from such comfortable quarters and affectionate tendance.

Leaving father and son together, he went down to cause the doctor to be sent for, and he explained to Earine the mood in which Sir Alured was.

"I can see," said the old politician, who, though he despised kings, honored women, "that you have an intimate relation with M. Valentine. I do not ask what it is."

"He is my only friend," said Earine.

"Sir Alured is determined to take his son away. He is impressed with the belief that the society of women is hurtful to him: The only thing I can promise you, Mademoiselle, is to tell you where they go."

With this she was forced to be content. The doctor soon arrived, and reported that the patient might at any time be removed, and that removal might perhaps be of service to him—might rouse him from his lethargy.

This report of course doubly excited Sir Alured.

"We will get away to-morrow morning," said the old man, fiercely. "I will not sleep till we are on the road."

"Where will you take him?" asked Catelan.

"To a place I have in the heart of the Westmoreland hills—Hawksmere. I have not seen it for twenty or thirty years, but it is a wild lonely old hall, where father and son, the last of a doomed race, may fitly end their wasted lives. There are two or three old faithful servants there. We shall do very well."

Catelan, through the whole affair, thought it best to allow Sir Alured to take his own course without argument. So he assisted him to make his arrangements: and, as the old gentleman was wildly eager to take possession of his son, every thing was done rapidly. By noon the next day they were in London: an hour later

father and son were on the North-Western, flying at express speed towards Westmoreland.

As Sir Alured entered the carriage, Catelan said,

"I shall write to Chicard at once, and tell him to come over at any cost. The moment he arrives I will bring him to Hawksmere."

"Thank you, old friend."

So father and son journeyed swiftly northward. Sir Alured's thoughts, as he sat opposite that white-haired ghost of his sole child, and knew that the strange fury of the Vivian race had wrecked him thus, are not by me describable. The sins of the fathers are visited on the children. The terrible tragedies of old were tragedies of race; and it is even so now, only the rare occurrence of racial purity renders the truth less obvious. One sees it in royalty: the physical courage and moral cowardice of the Stuarts, the obstinacy of the Guelphs, the taciturn treachery of the Bonapartes. In some great English houses such qualities as pride and avarice are continuously hereditary. Perhaps the Stanleys are truest of all our aristocracy to the law of their race, which is that, whatever the father may be, the son shall be wholly different. The cock-fighting Earl of yesterday—the orator and scholar and almost poet of to-day—the Tory-Radical animated blue-book of to-morrow—aptly illustrate a family whose motto is *Sans Changer*.

The express train made its way through country after country, while Sir Alured gazed at his son, who sat opposite him in his accustomed stupor. Now and then his lips would move, and the old man could hear the three mournful words,

"Yes, quite dead."

It was a strange companionship. As Sir Alured traversed the iron highway, his memory went back to old, old days, and his heart was troubled with a dire regret. Seeking his own satisfaction, in communion with beautiful scenery, rare pictures, famous books, he had selfishly sacrificed his son. Always had he led a lonely life, careless of the whole human race except himself. He was a man of very wide accomplishment. He had read all the great literatures, perused all the great pictures, seen all the great glories of Europe. He had obtained also the acquaintance, sometimes the friendship, of the best men of the day—men of that high class to which Achille Catelan belonged. Such men were wont to say among themselves that the eccentric Englishman ought to be a great man in his own country. But he had no ambition, either great or paltry. He cared neither to raise his country nor to distinguish himself. He dwelt in the tranquil penitential of his own mind, and closed all windows of the brain that looked towards the active world.

Still, he was made of steel that would not rust. Had he chosen to return to English life, he might have had his choice of seats in Parliament, having three at his own complete com-

mand—might have had a peerage, which indeed his father had declined—might easily have been a Cabinet Minister. These things he despised. Nor had he in middle life or in age what he possessed to some extent in youth—the ambition of literary achievement. The faculty he certainly commanded; and in his youth at Oxford had amazed and perplexed the authorities by certain brilliant indecorous *libelli*, Latin and English. But in after-life he had been simply a student—of nature, literature, art. He would lie in a gondola on the Venetian lagunes, dreaming over Dante or Ariosto; he would keep his lamp alight hours after midnight, trying to fathom some metaphysical mystery. He lived for himself: he was lost to the world—and to his son. This last was his bitter regret at the present time. Wearily did he ponder over it, while that same son of his, once of intensely active mind, now sunk in unconsciousness, seemed to live in a world where he could see but one creature—the lost Eva.

They reached Kendal at last, and Sir Alured ordered post-horses to Hawksmere. He had but one desire—to have his boy all to himself, whether cure were possible or not.

Alas for Earine! What should she do now, Vivian being sternly snatched from her to some remote and haply inaccessible region? She made up her mind with a promptitude due partly to her ancestry, partly to her experience. I must not at this moment disclose her resolve. Enough to say that she sat down and wrote a long letter to Mr. Eastlake.

Meanwhile M. Catelan, we may be sure, had not forgotten his promise. Dr. Chicard had more than once aroused the mortal spirit when lost in cataleptic depths. Why should he not rescue Valentine Vivian? Assuredly it was worth a trial: and Catelan wrote him a persuasive letter, urging him to come over for their friendship's sake, yet not failing to tell him that Sir Alured would pay him with princely generosity.

Dr. Chicard came.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE TRIBULATION OF BLOGG.

"Tribulant me."

MISS TATTLETON had been justly contemned by Madame de Longueville as prone to objectionable gossip. This did by no means deter Madame from paying an occasional visit to Miss Tattleton's shop. She sold many of those ridiculous odds and ends which ladies always seem to want; and she imparted her gossip, objectionable or unobjectionable, in a humorous style, which was at any rate never offensive. Madame de Longueville visited her in the double pursuit of amusement and of useful knowledge.

Miss Tattleton was a short, plump, dumpy,



florid, good-humored, intelligent maiden of fifty, who looked about forty—perhaps a year or two less. She had no education, wrote abominably, made frightful blunders in her accounts, made sad havoc with her h's. But she had that unique quality known as mother-wit. People who possess that quality are far pleasanter talkers than those who have the sparkling wit of drawing-room and dinner-table.

Madame de Longueville, it should be observed, kept school better than would many a better woman. Nobody would think, to see her at the head of her establishment, that she had been a denizen of the Prison Mazas. Nobody is wholly bad; and I really think Madame de Longueville liked the little ladies whom she had to educate. Perhaps they reminded her of the days when she herself was a little girl in Corsica. At any rate, though the old lust of cruelty which had driven her to persecute the inhabitants of the Rouen Convent had not died out, she was never cruel to these children. They were happier than ever before. In time past Miss Blogg had been much in the habit of boxing their poor little ears, delicate as shells of the sea; but the Blogg no longer dared do any thing of the kind. It is a habit of the scholastic idiot to box children's ears, whereby deafness and other evil effects frequently arise. To strike a child on the head is the perfection of cruel stupidity. No longer did Miss Blogg venture on this favorite amusement of hers: Madame had transformed her into a servile attendant on the little ladies. Blogg was not wholly unhappy. There was no possibility of bullying any body, but then she could play the hypocrite, which she enjoyed almost as well. She fawned at the feet of those whom she had been wont to persecute. Among these was Miss Maitland, who had become the chief teaching power in the establishment, and whose position was singularly improved.

I venture to think that Madame de Longueville encouraged Miss Maitland for something more than her utility. I think the Corsican sympathized somewhat with the girl's indomitable ardor and indefatigable perseverance. Margaret Maitland had a hunger for work and a thirst for knowledge. She was no genius, of course, for genius is indolent, but she had that special faculty which always succeeds, but which never enjoys. Her resolute spirit delighted Madame, who encouraged her in every way—partly, no doubt, for the sake of humiliating Miss Blogg. For to worry that unfortunate person was Madame's chief amusement just at this period.

I have said that Miss Blogg enjoyed her practice of hypocrisy: she had another source of enjoyment, in the practice of curiosity. Miss Blogg had a mania for knowing other people's concerns. To obtain this knowledge she would pause at nothing. If any body left open letters about, she pounced upon them at once and read them. If letters unopened came into her hands, and she could open them without detection and fasten them up again, she did so. Lazy of ani-

mal disposition though she was, she conquered that laziness, and rose earlier than was requisite in order to look at the letters which reached Teba House. If sealing-wax protected them, she could scrutinize address and postmark. If they were merely in the modern adhesive envelope, that could be opened with perfect ease. So unquenchable was her thirst for forbidden knowledge that she would read the letters written to the little girls at school. Of course she read Miss Maitland's letters, which were few. But her chief delight was to get at Madame's correspondence. Unluckily most of Madame's letters were written in curiously idiomatic French, and Miss Blogg was a very inferior French scholar. There was however one friend of Madame's whose letters gave Miss Blogg much amusement, and that was Miss Emily Sheldon, who wrote from the Colossus Hotel.

It happened that one day Madame de Longueville was chatting with Miss Tattleton, and listening with considerably amusement to the scandal of the vicinity, humorously exaggerated by that inimitable artist in gossip.

A mysterious lady had recently taken a furnished villa close by; and opinions were divided as to whether she was an actress or something else. Madame made a remark in some way disparaging actresses; and then Miss Tattleton suddenly referred, in a kind of uncertain way, to Emily Sheldon—but left her sentence abruptly unfinished, and began to talk rapidly about something else.

Madame de Longueville was a trifle too clever for Miss Tattleton. She showed complete indifference to the mention of Emily Sheldon's name. She continued the conversation for some time, and then walked homeward. And, as she walked, she meditated:

"She has heard something about my knowing Emily. How could that happen? I write to her, but then I post my own letters. It is uncommonly curious."

It often happens, when one is puzzled by some matter that seems mysterious, that intuition suddenly solves the problem. The real solution of the difficulty comes on the brain like a lightning flash. There is some slight link of connection, necessarily. On the present occasion the link was simple enough. Madame remembered that a day or two before one of her letters looked as if it had been opened. By an inexplicable intuitive process, she came to the conclusion that Miss Blogg was the culprit.

Laughing quietly to herself at the prospect of more amusement from the unfortunate Blogg, she resolved to keep watch the very next morning. An accomplished *mouchard* like Madame de Longueville was not to be baffled by a young woman of Miss Blogg's type. She was rather more amiable than usual to poor Miss Blogg that evening. When she retired she smoked her customary cigarette, and reflected on what she should do with her victim if she found her out. Madame was cruel, we know; and her cruelty was generally excited by qualities su-

perior to her own; but this was not exactly the case with reference to poor Miss Blogg.

Madame de Longueville had the sharpest ears in the world. She used them on the following morning. She heard Miss Blogg leave her room, which was a floor higher than Madame's, and go down stairs. Ten minutes later she heard the postman's knock. She waited a short time—then stealthily, with a velvet tread like that of a cat watching a mouse, descended to the breakfast-room. The door was a little open. Miss Blogg was there alone. Miss Blogg was greedily devouring an open letter. Madame recognized Emily Sheldon's large half-manly scrawl. The mouse was caught.

"Blogg!" said Madame, walking in suddenly, and taking the letter from her hand, "I have suspected you of this dishonorable conduct for some time. I will talk to you on the subject by-and-by."

She liked to tantalize her unfortunate victim. She allowed Miss Blogg to go on with her ordinary duties throughout the day in the usual manner. In the afternoon she strolled as far as the Crystal Palace and made a purchase. Not till the children were gone to bed did she summon Miss Blogg to her presence.

"Blogg," she said, "sit down."

Miss Blogg obeyed.

Madame, who had been eating her dainty little supper, took a sip of claret from a slender bell glass.

"Blogg," she resumed, quietly, "I have to-day discovered what I have long suspected, that you open and read my letters. You are probably aware that this is a felony. If I did my duty, I should at once place you in the hands of the police."

Miss Blogg began to snivel.

"I have no wish," pursued Madame, "to ruin your prospects in life. I think I have shown great tolerance towards you. You are almost useless, except as an upper servant. The question is, what am I to do on the present occasion?"

Miss Blogg shed a great number of crocodile's tears. Madame took another glass of claret.

"I have made up my mind," she said, after a long pause, "to offer you this alternative. If I send for the police, you will be ruined for life. If you choose to submit to such punishment as I decide to inflict upon you, I will forgive you. You can determine upon this at once—or I will give you till to-morrow morning. I can not give you any longer time, as the police must be informed of what has occurred."

Miss Blogg became pathetic. She threw herself at Madame's knees. She expressed her willingness to suffer any punishment Madame would decide upon. She would submit to any thing, if Madame would forgive her.

The forgiveness came, in due course. Madame had found that she frequently required a sworn assistant, who would obey all her commands and ask no questions. Having reduced

Miss Blogg to an abject condition—having found her out in dishonorable conduct which placed her at a disadvantage, she determined to make use of her. The punishment to be inflicted was held over her head in a mysterious manner; but the mystery was effective, and Madame ascertained that Miss Blogg was quite ready to be her slave and do her bidding, under whatsoever circumstances.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### EARINE'S PROJECT.

"Were it not better,  
Because that I am more than common tall,  
That I did suit me all points like a man?"

JACK EASTLAKE'S four-in-hand reached Broadoak Mill Farm a few days after Earine's letter had been written. Knowing that this would happen, she had made her various preparations for leaving: and one thing she had to do was to give a valedictory lecture to her little friend, Mary Ashow. The subject of this lecture was her conduct to John Grainger. Mary and he were somewhat at cross-purposes, as Earine saw clearly; and she thought she would try and set matters straight.

So she caught Mary Ashow one evening, in the moonlight, and told her she was going away altogether, and Mary, as in duty bound, professed to be very miserable about it. And she passed to the subject of John Grainger.

"He doesn't care about me a bit," said Mary, fretfully. "He likes you a great deal more than he likes me. And I'm sure I don't care about him."

"Mary, you are a foolish child," said Earine. "I know exactly what it is—you don't think him handsome and elegant enough for you. What does a farmer's daughter want with men who are handsome and elegant? But I'll tell you this, little girl: twenty years hence, whether you are married or single, the ruddy color will have perished from your cheeks, and your eyes will not be as bright as they are now, and you will be very much like other middle-aged women. But twenty years hence John Grainger will be a magnificent fellow in the prime of life; and his awkwardness will be replaced by manly ease; and the face you think ugly will be full of intelligence and power. You will be a silly child if you throw away John Grainger—a kind man, with whom you will be happy, a strong man, with whom you will be safe. Come, promise me you will not play the fool with him."

"He has never said a word to me," replied Mary.

"Of course not," replied Earine. "He is young and shy and modest. He never will say a word to you until he sees that you are likely to listen. But if he does not speak to you it will be your own fault—and you know it, I am certain."

Thus wisely did Earine admonish her young

friend. Having extorted from Mary Ashow a promise that she would not be unkind to Grainger, she resolved to give that young gentleman also a little gratuitous advice. Him she managed to get into a *tête-à-tête* when Mary Ashow was strolling with her father along the margin of Avon.

"I am going away in a few days, Mr. Grainger," she said, "and I may never see you or Mary again; but I hope that if we should meet years hence, you will be man and wife."

"I don't know," he replied. "I like Mary very much, but she doesn't seem to care about me, and she is quite ready to let any coxcomb make love to her. And, besides, if a man is to marry, don't you think he should choose a person who can understand him, and sympathize with his aspirations?"

"Ah, I see what you mean. Mary is pretty and gay and full of life; she is a beautiful girl, and so she has a little vanity. Did you ever know a pretty girl that wasn't vain? Would you rather she had no vanity and no beauty? There are plenty of ugly girls who would be glad to marry a fine young fellow like you, Mr. Grainger."

"You are laughing at me," he said.

"Yes, I am laughing at you—for you accuse good little Mary of vanity, and you are twice as vain yourself. You want her to understand you, and to sympathize with your aspirations. You think yourself a tremendously clever fellow, and Mary a rather silly child. That's *your* vanity. If you were as clever as you fancy yourself, you would try to understand *her*, and to sympathize with *her* aspirations. You can no more understand little Mary than you can understand a flower; she is as beautiful and pure and fragrant as a rose, and, like a rose, gives out her fragrance to every body. If you don't pick that rose, somebody else will, and then you'll never forgive yourself for having been so foolish."

For some time John Grainger was thoughtfully silent. Then he said:

"You are rather hard upon me, Miss Delisle, but I can see that there is truth in what you say. Mary's vanity is not so silly as mine. I ought to know better than to be vain of a cleverness which is a mere nothing to the cleverness of hundreds of other men. Yes, I see it quite clearly. Mary's is unconscious vanity—mine is conscious. But don't you think, Miss Delisle, a young fellow may be forgiven for longing to have a wife who is as clever as himself, and can join him in all his occupations, and can sometimes teach him things he does not know himself?"

"Any woman will soon teach you things you don't know," said Earine with a laugh. "That's what you clever young gentlemen need to learn. Men and women have two different kinds of work to do. Mary's goodness and beauty are quite as valuable as your cleverness. If you met with the sort of woman you are fancying—a woman as clever as yourself in all the

particular things you are fond of—you would soon find her very tiresome. An able man should marry a loving woman. But, you know, Mr. Grainger, if you will forgive me for talking so freely—and I do it because I like you and Mary so much—you are too young to know what a charming creature Mary is—you have not seen many women."

"I have seen *you*," said John Grainger, with creditable promptitude.

"Very good," said Earine, laughing. "Ah, my dear Mr. Grainger, what could you do with me? This wild Greek girl belongs, you know, to one whose blinded eyes may never again recognize her: but if she did not, you would find her a poor companion. I have had a strange life in many lands, and only of late have known English girls: and the more I see of them, the greater is my sorrow that I was not myself born an English girl. However, no more about myself. It is you and my dear little Mary I think about. She is a loving creature, as good as she is beautiful. Do not throw away so excellent an opportunity. Will you take my advice?"

"I think it is good advice," replied John Grainger.

Earine, having thus advised her two friends, patiently awaited the arrival of Mr. Eastlake, who reached the farm a couple of days later than the conversations here recorded. Nobody was with him except Clara, and her maid, and the secretary, and the grooms. They started for Birklands, and spent the first night at the *Peacock*. Not till they had dined at that hostelry, and Eastlake had drunk a fair quantity of Pinnell's port, did he offer to talk to Earine about the proposal made in her letter.

"It is a wild idea, my dear," he said.

"Yes," said Earine, "it is wild. Wild ideas suit wild people. Tame people have their own tame ways of doing things. Now my dear friend Vivian is wild, and so is that terrible old father of his, and so am I. And I want to see Vivian again, and must find some wild way of doing it."

Clara Eastlake was opening her innocent pale eyes to their utmost width.

"But," urged Eastlake, with a calm judicial air conferred by the port wine, "the idea of your disguising yourself in man's clothing, and going up into that wild part of England alone! There is no knowing what may happen."

"Of course not," replied Earine. "There never is. But you would not have me desert Vivian, would you, Mr. Eastlake?"

"No, indeed."

"Well, his father hates women, because he thinks they have caused his trouble; so should I, if I thought the same. He won't have a woman near him. He particularly detests me, though I don't think he looked at me. If I were to go to Hawkesmore as I am, Sir Alured would not admit me. If I go disguised and altered, and get into the house as some sort of a servant, I shall at least be near him—I shall

perhaps see him sometimes: Oh, let me—let me! It will drive me mad to be away from him.”

Jack Eastlake had never been known to refuse a request since the day when his uncle vainly attempted to make him drive four-in-hand. The dear old boy couldn't do it. His cash-box and the check-book were at the command of every prodigal of his acquaintance—and he happened to know several prodigals. As to refusing any thing to a beautiful girl, Jack Eastlake positively couldn't do it. So he gave in to this mad scheme of Earine's, and promised her all possible assistance, and took her to Birklands to furnish her fairly for her journey.

Earine's idea was simple enough. She had no chance of gaining admission to Hawksmere as a woman. If she could only play the part of a rustic boy, she might obtain entrance and fill some servile office. All she wanted was to be near Vivian—to see him now and then, if even afar off, and at rare intervals.

Jack Eastlake, having made up his mind to help her, helped her efficiently. He obtained the necessary costume for her from some ready-made shop in the nearest town, and laughed a marvellous laugh when she appeared in it. Earine was so serious in her masquerade that she did not object to being laughed at. She had one burning, passionate thought in her brain—to be with Vivian—and she cared for nothing else.

“What!” exclaimed Clara Eastlake, as she saw Earine, with a huge pair of scissors, preparing to cut short her magnificent hair, so that it might look masculine—“what! you won't waste that beautiful hair, surely!”

“My poor Valentine's hair,” said Earine, “is turned white with trouble. Shouldn't I be a vain, cruel creature to think about my hair?”

And therewith the scissors closed upon her lustrous locks, which fell upon the ground in mighty masses.

The metamorphosis was effected. Earine, desiring to be, not beautiful forever, but boyish for a time, used certain cosmetics, which darkened the skin of face and neck and hands. As we have seen, she sacrificed her abundant hair. After much deliberation with Mr. Eastlake, she concluded to dress herself in a sailor-like costume—for a sailor's life begins early, and sail-or-boys wander everywhere, and are generally found capable of turning their hands to any thing. Our Earine, with straw hat, blue jacket with anchor buttons, trowsers of white duck, looked, I assure you, a very sprightly little sail-or-lad.

Jack Eastlake accompanied his nautical Rosalind by rail to Lakeland, but she would not let him travel farther than Windermere. He went back reluctantly to Birklands, leaving her to her adventure, of whose result he was doubtful. No such doubts had she. Faith was vigorous in that daring young heart. She believed she would gain access to Vivian; she believed he

would recover; she believed that all would in the end be right. It was a happy faith, the fruit of a courageous spirit, which disaster and disappointment could not quell.

Earine, attired as a young sailor, and calling herself Charles Gough, slept one night at the Royal Hotel, Bowness. Very early did she awake in the morning, being eager to start on her travel. Before the servants had got the rooms ready, she descended to the beautiful lawns which sloped to Windermere, and watched the sunrise fading from sky and water.

Boats moored at the landing-place reminded her of the delicious Grecian seas. Curwen's Island, just opposite, low in the water and buried in dark foliage, was very different from the high-piled insular rocks of marble, gray with olive and green with vine, which she had known long ago. Beloved Windermere had not in its water that blue of the oriental sapphire which belongs to Homer's sea. But there was enough beauty on the lake that summer morning to delight and tempt Earine. She sprang into a boat, and rowed far into the middle of the mere, and took a header into the calm cool water. Was it the spirit of the sea-nymph or the sail-or-boy which impelled her to this freak? I know not: this only do I know, that the refreshing embrace of Windermere strengthened her for her long journey through the wildest regions of Lakeland to Hawksmere. Some of us obtain revival of spirit, like Antæus, by contact with earth. Earine drank in fresh strength from another element.

After a hearty breakfast, she gayly slung her knapsack over shoulder, and started for Hawksmere.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### HAWKSMERE.

“You should hear the wind on that wild hill's crest: Why, it blew the young hawk out of his nest; And it blew the ghosts (there were ghosts by scores)

Like a laundress's rags through the corridors.”

THE land of lakes is remarkable for the marvellous diversities of beauty and sublimity existing within so small an area. You have infinite riches in a little room. Between the magical softness of sinuous Windermere and the wild horror of Wastwater how great is the difference!

Hawksmere stands in the wildest part of the country. It is an old house, the earliest portion of which was fortified; it is jammed into a narrow ravine, down which thunders a force (the Cumbrian name for a waterfall). Above it towers a huge monster of a mountain—Hawksmere Fell. Half way up that fell is the mere (scarcely more than a tarn) which gives its name—a deep gloomy pool, set in the primeval granite, whose water is always intensely cold. There is not a tree in the neighborhood, except one enormous pine of immemorial age, which grows from the side of the ravine, and

has gradually sunk down until it bridges the force.

The force falls from ridge to ridge of rock into a river which feeds a wild lake below—a lake encompassed by hills, but with softer scenery at its farther end. From the upper windows of Hawksmere you can catch a glimpse of the lovelier regions of Lakeland, far away; you can see villages lying in the soft bosoms of delicious valleys, on the margins of romantic meres. You may fancy you hear the happy poet sing his love-carol, as he steers that tiny white-sailed yacht into the realm of sunset

"Droop, droop, soft little eyelids!

Droop over eyes of weird wild blue!

Under the fringe of those tremulous shy lids  
Glances of love and of fun peep through.

"Sing, sing, sweetest of maidens!

Carol away with thy white little throat

Echo awakes to the exquisite cadence

Here on the magical mere afloat.

"Dream, dream, heart of my own love!

Sweet is the wind from the odorous South—

Sweet is the island we sail to alone, love—

Sweet is a kiss from thy ruddy young mouth."

But from the lower windows of Hawksmere you see only steep barren fells rising from a lake that is almost always buried in gloom, and that is often lashed into storm by the sudden gusts which come wildly through fissures of those fells and in its dark wainscoted parlors you hear continuously the hoarse thunder of the waterfall, which indeed, when swelled by a season of rain, shakes the very ground that the old house has stood upon for some centuries.

Just where the stream fed by the force falls into the mere below, there is a hamlet of a few houses, and a little inn, known as the Ferry Inn, by reason of there being at that point a ferry across the lake. Our young sailor lad, whom we must know for the present as Charles Gough, reached the opposite shore at about four in the afternoon. He was terribly fagged. He had walked, I should think, thirty miles, much of the distance being over difficult roads. Right glad was he, while the ferry-boat which he had hailed was slowly crossing, to sit on the mossy margin of the lake, and take off shoes and socks, and refresh his weary feet in the cool water.

All sorts of travellers are seen in Lakeland. The people there are not easily surprised. Poets have dwelt there, you know: Wilson, and Wordsworth, simple as heroes of the "Odyssey"—Coleridge, inspired and erratic—De Quincey, drowned in dreams of opium—have been its denizens. The country-folk are accustomed to strange visitors. They ask no questions. A stripling sailor, very tired with long journeying, did not seem at all an out-of-the-way guest for the Ferry Inn. Mrs. White, most hospitable of landladies, gave him a duck and green peas for supper, and a pint of excellent claret.

Lakeland is one of the few parts of England where there is good entertainment at the smallest hostelry you can enter. If there be nothing to tempt the appetite, assuredly there will

be mutton-ham, a comestible quite unknown in the southern parts of England. But in the season the lakes supply trout and char—the latter a fish it is worth while to travel to Windermere to eat. And there is almost always claret—a beverage which it would be absurd to call for in the village inns of any other county.

Our young sailor was not too tired to eat and drink—nor, after supper, which was served to him at six o'clock—to enter into conversation with the people of the house. Outside the inn there were benches, placed on a little lawn; and on the lawn, and on the sloping shingle below, nets were always drying. And old Jem White, fisherman, and landlord of the Ferry Inn, was wont in the summer evenings to sit on a bench and smoke his pipe, and talk to and listen to his friends. It was the central point of the hamlet—the club where all the old cronies spent their leisure time.

This same hamlet lived partly on occasional visitors, but mainly on the old house of Hawksmere. This had been left for years in charge of an old servant and his wife, John and Mary Birket—who kept two or three handmaidens. The establishment was very modest, and no member of the Vivian family had visited it for many years; but the steward of Sir Alured's property was ordered to treat John Birket liberally, and the consumption of meat at Hawksmere sufficed to keep a butcher's shop open in the little hamlet. Of course, since Sir Alured's arrival with his invalid son, the place had become much bricker; but the baronet's proceedings had rather perplexed the inhabitants, and especially John Birket.

He was wont to come down to the Ferry Inn, and tell his friends his troubles. On this very evening our sailor-lad, who had taken a seat outside on the bench, and was listening to the conversation as well as he could, the dialect being a great difficulty to his unaccustomed ears, heard something which encouraged him.

"Thou ne'er saw any body like the meäster," growled John Birket. "He's clean mad. He's turned away all the lasses the day, and he'd fain turn away my auld weyre, but I spoke up and told un what I thowt."

As I don't think my readers will care for this kind of Doric, I shall proceed to translate John Birket and his friends into something like ordinary English.

"What will you do, John?" asked Jem White. "You and the old lass can't do all the work."

"No, indeed. Somebody has to sit up with Mr. Valentine, and the master's killing himself because he won't trust a woman. Can't you spare one of your lads, Jem, to come up to help about the house? I'll give him a shilling a day."

"Yes," said White; "you can have Tom. But you'll want more help."

"Indeed I shall, and I don't know where to look for it. I want somebody to wait on Mr. Valentine."

To this dialogue listened Earine with eagerness. Once or twice she thought of making an offer, but refrained. At last she resolved to go in and talk to good Mrs. White, whose countenance was a reflex of her kindly nature.

It must be regretted that our sailor told the landlady a tissue of falsehoods. Charles Gough represented himself as a young fellow who had gone to sea against his parents' will, and who was now in great trouble, abandoned by all his friends. He was looking for employment. He could turn his hand to any thing. He had nursed his shipmates in fevers abroad. He had just heard that help was wanted up at Hawksmere, but he did not like to make the offer abruptly. Would Mrs. White tell her husband that he should be very glad to make himself useful?

"Bless your handsome face, of course I will!"

And the kind landlady went out at once, and talked to her husband and John Birket. The latter was only too glad to meet with such a godsend. Sagaciously he said:

"A young gentleman who has run away to sea is just the right sort of lad. He shall come to-morrow morning. I'll just mention it to the master to-night. I hope he'll be kind and attentive to poor Mr. Valentine."

Earine heard those last words through the open window, and thought in her heart how she longed to be kind to him. How she longed again to see those unrecognizing eyes—to hear those three words which recorded Eva's death. She longed for the pain she had lost. If the old Vivian of the Greek island might never return, she would gladly spend her life in tending the Vivian of to-day, in whom sharp sorrow had extinguished consciousness.

Happy was Earine through that sleepless summer night. She lay in her little chamber facing the lake: it looked southward, and there was a full moon, and she saw the line of light upon the water. All night she heard the thunder of the force that came down past the dwelling of the Vivians: it seemed to her like a living thing, whose voice had been heard for centuries by the forefathers of the man she loved.

God had been very good to her, she thought. Yes, she should see Vivian, be close to him, watch his slightest movement, guess what he needed and supply his need. Yes, her faith had been verified; again she would be by his side and soothe him in his terrible trouble. And, if this portion of her belief had been realized, had she not reason to cling to the rest? She clung to it as if it were the revelation of the Divinity. Yes, he would recover; he would be again the young hero of the Ægean, beautiful and strong as Apollo; he would emerge from that strange apathy into which he had fallen. Thus, all night long, she thought, by sleep unvisited; and all night long the moonlight lay on the silver surface of the lake; and all night long the thunderous monotone of Hawksmere Force was sounding in her ears.

Early she arose, be assured. Not too early

for Mrs. White, whose eyes were usually open by sunrise, and who had breakfast ready for her sailor-guest at an hour that would amaze the inhabitants of cities. Oh the home-made brown bread, the red-fleshed trout, the curled thin slices of boiled mutton-ham, the thinner oatmeal cake, the coffee accompanied by the thick rich cream of the North Countree! A breakfast for a true epicure: but our visitor-lad had no appetite: he was too intensely excited by the expectation of a summons to Hawksmere. In good time that summons came, and he climbed the steep hill by a path which led along the margin of the force, and was brought into the presence of Sir Alured Vivian.

Scarcely had the old baronet glanced at Earine in the garden of Broadoak Mill Farm; but even if he had noticed her, he would not have recognized her in her sailor's apparel. He had heard from John Birket the young sailor's story—a story which had only the slight disadvantage of being untrue. As it shares this disadvantage with most of the stories one hears every day, I don't know that this need be an objection to it.

At any rate, Sir Alured accepted it, readily and implicitly. To him it seemed only natural that a boy should run away from his father and go to sea. The Vivians were a race that perpetually outraged paternal and filial relations. Hence it happened that Earine's fable was precisely the best that could have been invented to suit him. I wonder whether she had any notion thereof in its inception.

"I want you to wait on my son," said Sir Alured. "He is ill and unconscious. The illness came upon him suddenly, through a great shock which he received; it may perhaps leave him just as suddenly. I wish him never to be alone: and you and I will take turns to watch with him."

Thus was Earine installed. There was a suite of four rooms on the first floor, opening on one another, arranged round a wide lobby or landing-place, which seemed to have been used as an antechamber. These just suited the exigencies of the case. The two middle rooms were Valentine's sitting-room and bedroom; on the left Sir Alured had fitted up a bedroom for himself, and that on the right was now prepared for Charles Gough.

The old gentleman at once found that he had a most efficient helper. Earine soon made a marvellous change in the comfort of the place. She knew, as well she might, how to contribute to Valentine's unconscious happiness, his mere animal content; and so deftly she did every thing that Sir Alured was amazed.

"These sailor-lads are very clever," he said to himself.

And he gave himself more rest, and acquired a greater tranquillity of spirit, when he saw how well his new servant did his duty.

"Thank God," he soliloquized, "I have got poor Val out of the clutches of the women! Women have always been the bane of our family. I wish there were none in the world."

An illogical sort of wish. But that dignified historian, Mr. Froude, assures us that Henry VIII. would have been a most excellent person in a world without women. So Sir Alured is not devoid of authority for his ejaculation.

Little did he dream that his indefatigable assistant was a woman. Never was there such a nurse as the young sailor. Weariness and drowsiness were unknown to him; he was always at hand; he knew exactly the sort of things Valentine could eat and drink, and would prepare them himself in the huge old kitchen, having cajoled Mrs. Birket into permitting this invasion of her privileges. Sir Alured was amazed, and thought daily more and more of the cleverness and tact produced by a sailor's life.

Meanwhile Earine was not wholly unhappy. Her love still lay in that cruel stupor, and there was no meaning or intelligence in his eyes. But she was with him, at any rate; safe, as she believed, from discovery; and she held stoutly to the faith of his ultimate recovery. And, on the nights when Sir Alured watched with his son, and Earine, alone in her chamber, looked out upon the wild fells, and listened to the thunder of the force, the half-Pagan creature invoked the aid of the elementary powers around her. Surely there was a divinity in that strong stream which roared down the ravine of Hawksmere—which had made music in the ears of many generations of Vivians.

She had been badly brought up, this Earine; she knew her Homer, but not her catechism; she believed in Athena, like Mr. Ruskin, and in Leto, like Mr. Gladstone. And so, as I have said, she called for aid to the spiritual dweller in Hawksmere Force, the god or goddess whose strong voice was always heard beside the house of the Vivians.

I fear it was not her invocation which brought Dr. Chicard.

### CHAPTER XXX.

DR. CHICARD.

"En médecine, il n'y a pas d'étranger."

THERE are two classes of Frenchmen—fat and lean. The fat are jovial, good-humored, able, facetious; the lean are angry, inscrutable, passionate. When the fat Frenchman is predominant, France is content; there is no talk of barricades; there is much epigrammatic chaff of the ruling powers, but it is humorous and harmless. When the lean Frenchman gets his turn, there is a row; there is excitement in the Quartier Latin; the cafés close early, and cavalry come thundering down the boulevards; and there might any day be a Robespierre if there were not already a Bonaparte.

Dr. Chicard was a fat Frenchman, just below the middle height, with pronounced abdomen and florid complexion, but with the keenest and merriest eye in the world and a small decisive mouth. He arrived alone at Hawksmere, M.

Catelan being unable to leave London. He thought he had got into a wild part of the world, but took matters easily, being ready for any adventure.

Sir Alured Vivian, like most English gentlemen, had a prejudice against fat men, and was disposed to think Dr. Chicard could not be so very clever. But he caught his eye, and he did not think so twice. Dr. Chicard's glance seemed to indicate that he detected the very thoughts of the man he was looking at. Sir Alured, being a true Briton, came to the conclusion that the Doctor's fatness was a punishment allotted to him for being a Frenchman.

Before he introduced Dr. Chicard to his son's rooms, Sir Alured told him what he knew of his story.

"This young lady's death caused the trance," said Chicard. "Was he very fond of her?"

"I suppose so. I had not seen him for years. But I am sure there was nothing wrong between them."

"Yet she was accused of poisoning her husband. Pardon me, Sir Alured, but this story sounds strangely to a stranger. Young men are not usually so affected by the death of their married cousins. If there were an intrigue—if your son had any slight reason to believe that for his sake his cousin had killed her husband—there would be a stronger cause for this catalepsy."

"I did not think of that," said Sir Alured.

"No," replied Dr. Chicard; "and it is merely a guess of mine. But in cases of this kind it is most important to get at the cause of the malady; you must therefore pardon me if I should ask questions which you may consider neither pertinent nor pleasant. Let us go to the patient. Who is with him?"

"A young sailor-lad. I have turned away all the women-servants. I believe women were the cause of his seizure."

"Possibly," returned the doctor.

"Sailors are wonderfully clever," said Sir Alured. "This boy nurses him like a woman."

Herewith they went to Valentine's room: he sat in a chair by the window, listless and silent. Earine was standing near him, watching him with wistful eyes. Dr. Chicard's keen quick glance took in both patient and attendant.

He gazed into Vivian's eyes, and felt his pulse. Then he asked two or three questions of his sailor attendant, at whom he looked so sharply that Charles Gough actually flushed. Then he notified to Sir Alured that his inquiry was over for the present.

"What do you think of the case?" asked the baronet eagerly, as soon as they had left the room.

"Worse cases have been cured," said Dr. Chicard, oracularly. "I think, however, that there was some cause of mental disturbance prior to his cousin's death. If we could ascertain this, it would be of great value. By the way, where did you get the young sailor who is attending on your son?"

Sir Alured explained; adding that a sailor seemed as good a nurse as a woman.

"Quite," said Dr. Chicard.

The doctor proceeded to inform Sir Alured that, before he could decide on any course of action with his patient, he must carefully watch him for some days at least.

"Cases of this kind are very tedious," he said; "but what slight success I have attained in their cure has been the result of slow and patient study."

"I am learning to be patient," said Sir Alured. "Take your own time and your own method, Dr. Chicard. I will not hurry you."

Dr. Chicard took his time. He would sit with Vivian for an hour or more, watching all his movements, which were few. Vivian was never restless, but sat stone still, with vacant eyes, from morning till night. The physician only watched him as yet, administering no medicine except an occasional cool draught, half stimulant, half sedative.

When not with his patient, Dr. Chicard was wandering about the house and grounds, and down into the village. The people thought there never was such an inquisitive man. He asked innumerable questions of the oddest sort. He got out of old Birket all he knew of the history of the Vivians, of Sir Alured and his wife. He found out every body in the little village, questioned man, woman, and child indiscriminately, and always managed to extort true answers to his questions. He seemed to have a preternatural power of understanding their dialect, which would be quite unintelligible to the vast majority of Englishmen. He went about investigating till he might have written a copious chronicle of Hawksmere and its inhabitants, and of all that had ever happened there.

Of course he heard the story of the young sailor's opportune arrival a dozen times. John Birket told him first—next Mrs. White of the Ferry Inn, where the doctor made himself at home at once. He would come down in the forenoon, and sit on a bench and look on the lake, and refresh himself with a little of Mrs. White's best claret from a tumbler. Given to asking questions himself, he never would give a direct reply to a question. He was asked a dozen times a day how Mr. Valentine was: he never gave an answer which his hearers could comprehend.

All this time Charles Gough was the only person whom he left unquestioned. His time was to come. One morning Sir Alured came into his son's room to relieve the young sailor, and he was passing through the lobby to his own room, when Dr. Chicard met him.

"Come out a little," said the doctor kindly. "If you confine yourself so much you also will be ill, and then my poor patient will have no one to nurse him."

The result was that doctor and sailor walked out of the house through the garden at the rear, and ascended by the force to the tarn which gives the place its name.

"This is hard work," said Dr. Chicard, seating himself on a granite boulder near the edge of the tarn, and leisurely commencing to make a cigarette. "You young fellows have breath enough for climbing. I haven't. And it is a gloomy place, now we are here."

To the Frenchman it doubtless was a gloomy place; but most Englishmen would have rejoiced in the almost awful solitude of the tarn itself, and in its contrast to the marvellous view of lakes and mountains, and of the sea bounding the whole, which was visible from the opening of the ravine.

"Take a cigarette," said Dr. Chicard, suddenly, offering his companion one he had just made.

"I never smoke, thank you," was the reply.

"What!" exclaimed the doctor, lighting his cigarette. "A young sailor, and not smoke! Either you *do* smoke, or you are *not* a sailor."

There was no answer.

"Look here, Charles Gough," said Dr. Chicard, after a considerable pause, during which he had furtively watched his victim while apparently interested in the progress of his cigarette—"look here, I like to hear people's histories; I brought you here to hear yours: begin."

Thereupon the sailor-boy began to tell the well-invented story of going to sea against his parents' will, and the rest of it. Dr. Chicard listened for some time with an amused smile, making another cigarette, then suddenly exclaimed:

"Enough of that. It is a pretty story, but I am rather tired of it. I don't want to hear the fictitious adventures of a sailor-lad called Gough, but of a young lady whose name I do not know, and who is here in nautical disguise."

Earine, startled by these words, felt as if she should faint. Dr. Chicard's smile reassured her.

"You can't deceive an old doctor," he said. "I think I ought to know a girl from a boy. You are a clever little actress, certainly. Now, don't be alarmed. I know you have disguised yourself for a good reason, and I won't betray you if you tell me the truth."

"What am I to tell you?" asked Earine, plaintively.

"Answer my questions. Will you answer truly, *foi de demoiselle*?"

"Yes," she said in a low tone.

"Speak out, child. Old doctors are always deaf, from the *tintamarre* of troublesome patients; and it is not easy to hear any thing, for the roar of this absurd cataract. Now. Where were you born?"

"Somewhere in Greece."

"How old are you?"

"I don't know. I must be more than twenty."

"How long have you known Mr. Vivian?"

"About five years."

"Are you his wife?"

"No: I am his slave."



"His slave!" exclaimed the Frenchman. "I thought there were no slaves where there are no Bonapartes. Where did you first see him?"

"On an island in the *Ægean* Sea. His men took me prisoner. He kept me with him, and taught me English, and we read *Homer* together."

"Were you long in this island?"

"A few months. But *Apollo* struck him—"

"What do you mean? Tell me exactly what happened?"

"We were out together on the hills in the hot noontide. He fell down insensible. Then he was mad for a long time, and I nursed him. Then when he grew better he did mad things: robbed people on the sea, and was very violent. Then suddenly he came away, and sent me to a school in France, and went himself to England."

"Go on with your story. What happened to him in England?"

"His cousin died: she was accused of killing her husband. He loved her very much, as a cousin—*pas d'amour*, you know. I think this upset his brain, which *Apollo* had weakened. I nursed him: then his father came, very furious, and took him away; then I told some kind friends I should follow him, and they helped me to disguise myself, and I came here."

"You are a clever girl and a good girl," said Dr. Chicard; "and you have told me what may perhaps cure him. I thought there was something before his cousin's death—it was that sunstroke. I shall cure him now."

"Will you?" cried Earine, in a passion of delight. "Will you really? Is it quite true?"

"Yes; but it is indeed you who will do it. Without what you have told me, I should have made some mistake. But tell me one thing more. Do you remember any particular act of violence when he was first made wild by the sunstroke?"

"One day," she said, "a man of the yacht's crew insulted me as I went to the well. He was on the terrace above, and saw it, and shot him with his rifle."

"Killed him?"

"Yes."

"Excellent. I think I see my way. You will help me, will you not, and do every thing I tell you?"

"Every thing," she said simply.

"Then go home, little girl, and take good care of him. You and I will soon cure him. But say not a word to his father."

Away sprang Earine, light of heart and light of foot, and ran gayly down towards the old house by the mossy path beside the waterfall. The spirit that haunted this thunderous force seemed to speak lovingly to her as she passed along; beneath the roar of the descending ghyll there seemed a murmur of solace, as if the naiad knew that there were happier days for her mortal sister. Earine recognized the consoling voice; she stooped to the margin of the ravine, and plucked a tremulous spray of maid-

en-hair fern, and placed it in her bosom. Then she ran on again, and passed through the garden up to the anteroom.

Sir Alured, she found, had not called for her. She went into Vivian's room. The old man was watching his son with weary wistful gaze. So full was Earine of hope at that moment that she could scarcely refrain from offering the old man some comfort; but she remembered Dr. Chicard's warning, and was silent.

When she was left alone with Vivian, she threw herself on her knees before him, and looked into his mysteriously unsearchable eyes.

"My beautiful love!" she exclaimed in a whisper, "my darling! my master! you will know me again soon. Your vision will come back from the world of death to the world of life. You will see your Earine and know her—and perhaps love her—but if you hate her she will love you all the same."

Meanwhile Dr. Chicard remained sitting on the granite boulder by the lonely tarn, and reflecting on what he had heard.

"A mad family," he soliloquized—"sunstroke—all manner of wild adventures. Yes, the case is clear. I shall cure him. And Catalan says Sir Vivian will give me a thousand pounds—that is twenty-five thousand francs, which sounds much finer. It will be good work. I have been here but a week—I can finish in a fortnight."

"And what will become of the little sailor-boy?" he continued. "Ha, ha! To think that nobody even suspected it was a girl! How blind and dull these English people are! They think about the color of their eyes, and quite forget that they were intended to see with."

"Now I know quite well, when my patient is cured, and the little girl's story is known to this rich Englishman—I know quite well what will happen. He will say, 'Yes, good girl, very good girl. Give her ten pounds. Stay: bring me my check-book: I will write her a check for twenty. She deserves it; she has behaved very well—though I don't approve of young women going about the country dressed like men.'

"Yes, that's what the old man will say, or something like it. But what will the young man say if I bring him back from the other world, and he is face to face at first with this girl? He *must* love her, I should think. We shall see. They are very strange, these English."

"C'est egal. Vingt-cinq mille francs!"

Dr. Chicard threw the end of his cigarette into the tarn, and walked down towards Hawksmere.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

CECILE DE CASTELNAU.

"Etre sage quand on est jolte, c'est de l'héroïsme! Quand on est laide, ce n'est plus que de la résignation."

MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE's prosperity at Sydenham continued and increased. Her school

was the admiration of the neighborhood. Her distinction, of manner was thought supreme. She quite enjoyed the success of her project, and made her little pupils very happy, and ruled Miss Blogg with a rod of iron. She commanded the approval of every one, from the parson of the parish down to the ticket-keeper at the gate of the Crystal Palace gardens.

These same gardens were a favorite haunt of hers, when she wanted to be alone. Leaving the submissive Blogg in charge, she would wander for an hour or two in their quieter parts. Here, one day, she was surprised and startled to encounter an old acquaintance. It was a Frenchman, who might have been any age between twenty-five and fifty; his face was clean shaven, his coat buttoned to the neck, and he wore a ribbon of the Legion of Honor.

"Ah, Madame," said this somewhat dubious person, "I am rejoiced to see you."

Madame did not seem exhilarated by the meeting.

"I have been thinking of calling upon you," he continued, "but I felt sure that I should meet you here some day, and you might not care to receive me at your residence. It is a nice place, and you have some pretty little students. You are in clover, Madame. But I hope you do not treat those pretty children as you did the young demoiselles at Rouen."

Madame did not answer.

"You should not be out of temper, Teresa Moretti," he said. "We know what you have been doing, and are satisfied with you. You gave us useful information concerning Catelan and his friends. But you must be prepared always to obey orders; you do not want to be in the Mazas again, do you?"

"What am I to do?" she asked.

"What you will like very well. To-morrow at one o'clock a splendid equipage will stop at your gate, and an old gentleman dressed as a general officer will hand out a young lady of about eighteen. He will tell you that he has heard of your excellent establishment, and that he wishes to place his ward with you as a parlor boarder. He will offer you two hundred a year, which you will doubtless accept. He will stipulate that she shall be treated with great respect by every one, except of course yourself, and that she is to have a personal attendant always near her. He will name her to you as Mademoiselle Cecile de Castelnau. She is—"

Madame started with surprise.

"Yes. Now this is your duty. She is to be kept under close surveillance, with as little apparent rigor as possible. The personal attendant whom you select must never be far away from her, and must prevent her communicating with any one. Every letter that she receives or sends must be opened, copied, and the copies sent to me. It is not necessary for me to tell you *why* this is to be done. If you read her correspondence, your quick brain will find out the secret. Now, will you attend to my orders?"

"I must, as you know."

"Parbleu! your ill temper is enough to make one angry. It is an easy and lucrative job, as you know. Would you like to be sent back to Paris?"

She knew full well that the French police could cause her to be apprehended at any moment. So she had nothing to do but obey, and, having signified her intention to do so, was courteously saluted by the Frenchman, and left to her own meditations.

Foolishly enough, she fancied she had escaped from espionage, and was now a free woman. This incident taught her that she was a slave for life. She did not dislike the work she was now ordered to do, but she regretted the loss of her freedom. However, it was not to be avoided, so she made the best of it, and turned her attention to the business in hand.

Was it not fortunate that she had tamed Blogg? She should be Cecile's personal attendant, and should extract from her all her secrets. Blogg's plausible fawning style would be the very thing. Blogg should be instructed to abuse Madame, and apparently to make common cause with the fair prisoner. As the coming comedy in all its details passed before her fancy, her eyes sparkled and her lips smiled, and she forgot all her previous annoyance. It was a task after Madame's own heart.

She went home and scolded Blogg sharply for having allowed one of the little girls to fall down and soil her dress, and wrote a gossiping letter to Miss Sheldon, and read prayers, and then had supper. Her spirits were quite elevated by the prospect of some professional business.

Next day occurred that which had been predicted. The superb equipage arrived; the grand general alighted; and then also alighted a tall young lady of aristocratic appearance and haughty and reserved manners. The conversation between the general and the school-mistress took precisely the form which had been foretold, Mademoiselle de Castelnau not saying a word as it proceeded. When all had been arranged, the general took stately leave of his ward, and went away alone. Hereupon Madame ordered Miss Blogg to appear, and desired her to wait on Mademoiselle de Castelnau to a room which she had assigned to her. The young lady, who had said nothing since the first few words of ordinary introduction, followed Miss Blogg at once.

"Now, I wonder," soliloquized Madame, "what this may mean. There is some mystery. I shall find out, Vionnet says: I suppose so; but he would have saved some trouble by giving me a hint. The girl is haughty and silent, and will be rather troublesome, I fancy. Never mind, I think I can manage her."

At dinner-time Cecile de Castelnau was very quiet, had very little appetite, and answered Madame's remarks with polite brevity. The little girls looked with wide-open eyes at this new arrival, who averted them by her proud melan-

choly. When nine o'clock arrived, Madame desired Miss Blogg to accompany the young lady to her bedroom. Cecile went without a murmur, saluting Madame with a stately courtesy at the door.

"Come to me when you have attended on Mademoiselle, Blogg," said the school-mistress.

When Miss Blogg returned, Madame was comfortably seated at the table, and a maid-servant was just bringing in an appetizing little supper. Simple enough: a dish of liver and sweetbread, with peas and asparagus; nothing more. But, with a bottle of tolerable claret, one may manage to sup on such material.

"Take a chair, Blogg," said Madame, affably, after the servant had removed the covers and left the room. "I dare say you can manage to eat a little supper."

Blogg was very much delighted, but even more surprised. She was rather a gluttonous young person, and a little supper of this kind was like a taste of Elysium to her. It was a practice of hers to declare that she did not care what she ate; but there was not a greedier young woman in Europe.

"I am greatly pleased with you lately, Blogg—you are much improved. If you go on so well, I shall probably increase your salary," said Madame, by-and-by.

Miss Blogg, who received thirty pounds a year, was eloquently grateful.

"The young lady who came here this afternoon is to reside here as a parlor-boarder. What has she said to you as yet?"

"Scarcely any thing, ma'am. I wished to help her to undress, but she wouldn't let me. She told me in a haughty way that I could go, and locked the door after me."

"Ah," thought Madame, "an oversight of mine. She must not have a key to that door."

"Take another glass of wine, Blogg; it won't hurt you. Now, listen to me. You are to attend on this young lady at all times; I shall get some one else to do your duty with the little girls. When I permit her to go out, you will go with her; and you must be careful to prevent her talking to any one. I wish all her letters brought to me—those she writes and those she receives. I can not tell you the reason of these precautions; but her friends wish her very carefully looked after. Now, you must do this, and be quiet about it—don't say a word to Miss Tatletton or any body else."

"Oh no, ma'am!" exclaimed Miss Blogg.

"I shall find you out if you do," said Madame, severely; "and I shall not again forgive you."

"I will be very careful indeed, ma'am," said Blogg, half crying. "I will do all you tell me—indeed I will."

"If you do," said Madame, graciously, "you shall not have cause to regret it. Now you can go to bed. Call the young lady at seven tomorrow, and assist her to dress."

Poor Miss Blogg had greatly admired the majestic courtesy which Mademoiselle de Cas-

telnan had made when she retired. She thought it would be a fine thing to imitate it; but a courtesy, an elegant movement when the knees which bend to make it are those of a tall slender girl in amplitude of silk, is rather grotesque when performed by a dumpy young woman, short-legged, with clinging petticoats. Madame had a quiet laugh for full ten minutes after Miss Blogg had left.

"That good Blogg!" she ejaculated. "What will she try to do next?"

Next morning after breakfast, Madame had an interview with her new pupil in her private room, sending Blogg to bring her thither.

"Take a seat, Cecile," she said. "Now will you tell me what studies you particularly prefer to pursue? With a young lady of your age it is always best to attend to those subjects which are most attractive."

"Thank you, Madame. I wish particularly to read English and Italian. I have been studying Shakspeare a little, and desire to continue. And I should like to practise drawing, but do not much care about music. I have no voice to sing, and the piano is tiresome."

"It shall be arranged as you wish. We have an excellent drawing-master. You shall read Italian with me, and English with Miss Maitland. Miss Blogg is to become your personal attendant, and I hope you will inform me if you are at all dissatisfied with her."

In the afternoon Madame told Cecile that she had better take a walk, and ordered Miss Blogg to accompany her. During her absence, Madame went to her room, locked herself in, and commenced a search for correspondence. All the boxes and cases were locked, but this did not trouble Madame, who had a bunch of skeleton keys, and used them like an adept. She found little to enlighten her. In a writing-desk there were letters from girl-friends, and scraps of girl-poetry, French and English, and a few girl-photographs—nothing of any kind to indicate any communication with the other sex.

Madame was disappointed.

"Never mind," she reflected. "The sly creature carries her love-letters about with her. I must search her pockets to-night."

So she retired, taking with her the key of the chamber.

Mademoiselle de Castelnau took no notice of the key's disappearance. She was polite, and reserved, and submissive, and did precisely what she was told. She took her drawing-lessons. She read Italian—it was Tasso—with Madame, who was a capital instructress. She read Shakspeare with Miss Maitland, who had never looked into Shakspeare. But the moment she was told of what she should have to do, Margaret Maitland, with characteristic energy, set to work upon Shakspeare; read through all the plays and all the annotations of an old edition which she happened to possess, and contrived to keep herself well in advance of her pupil.

Cecile, a few days after her arrival, asked

Miss Blogg where there was a post-office. That excellent person replied that Madame de Longueville sent all letters to the post herself. In this arrangement the young lady at once acquiesced, and in the course of the day handed to her attendant several letters, all addressed to lady correspondents. They were all sealed with a pretty fantastic device: but we need hardly say that Madame de Longueville could copy the impression of a seal in bread, and melt wax with the steam from a kettle. Both processes she performed with exquisite dexterity; and read the letters, and caused them to be copied, and sealed them again.

The demoralized Blogg copied all these letters save one, which Madame herself executed. It was addressed to Miss Trafford; but, strange to say, it began—"Dearest Charles."

"Here I am, at school," wrote the young lady. "Isn't it fun? But I was determined not to return to France just now—and dear Maman could not give up her Trouville—and so we made a compromise. If they get me back in Paris they will want to marry me to that odious Prince de L—, with the green eyes and no waist. Poor dear Maman says in her indifferent way, 'Marry him, child, marry him! He is a foolish fellow. You will be able to do what you like with him.' And he certainly is the most foolish young Prince I ever met. But I have lived in England, Charlie dear, and have met *you*, and I don't mean to have Prince Greeneyes. It will be hard work for me, you know. I can not expect any help from poor Maman; she is as weak as water; and my property is very much wanted in a certain family."

"I can't write you a very long letter, Charlie, for I have to write to several other young ladies. Be careful what you write to me; for you may be sure I am under surveillance—indeed the principal of the establishment is quite like a *mouchard* of the politer sort. She must be an Italian. I am reading Tasso with her, and she knows the language perfectly. I behave like a very obedient child, you know, for it is not worth while to quarrel with people of this sort. I go to bed at nine, and rise at seven, which is good for the health."

"Write to me, darling."

Madame laughed very much over this letter, which she copied herself. It was the first scrap of information she had obtained, for her search among Cecile's personal apparel, effected while the young lady slept, had been without result. It was addressed, as I have said, to Miss Trafford, at the Colossus Hotel.

Madame at once resolved to pay an evening visit to Miss Sheldon. Assiduously had the two ladies corresponded, and the little actress had been much edified and amused by the subjugation of Blogg. Naturally, the question as to what was to be done about Sir Alured Vivian had been discussed in all its bearings: but for a long time there was this unmanageable obstacle, that there was no finding out whither

Sir Alured was gone. This difficulty (like many others) was one day removed by accident, a paragraph from the "*Westmorland Gazette*," which stated that the head of the house of Vivian had visited Hawksmere after an absence of a quarter of a century, having been copied into the "*Times*."

Madame was in the gardens of the Palace that afternoon, and again encountered her friend Vionnet.

"I hope you are pleased with your pupil, Madame," he said.

"Perfectly satisfied," she answered. "Copies of the first letters she has written were posted to you this morning. Only one of them is at all important."

"I came here this afternoon in the hope of meeting you, Madame," he said, "in order to say you must take charge of this young lady during the vacation. You would like change of air, I dare say, and she may as well travel a little. Take her to some quiet part of England or Wales. Take some other companion if you like, for I dare say she is not the pleasantest company. We shall not be illiberal. There is a check on account." It was filled up for an amount that quite satisfied Madame.

That evening, as she had intended, she went to the Colossus, having now a double inducement. For it occurred to her that Emily Sheldon would be a nice travelling companion, and that her easy gaiety would compensate Cecile's haughty melancholy; also, that Emily might perhaps do some good to herself by going into Westmorland. Her project therefore was to induce Miss Sheldon to join her party, and to take her house or lodgings in the lake district as near Hawksmere as possible.

So, at eight o'clock, she reached the drawing-room of the Colossus Hotel, where pretty piquant Emily Sheldon was quite the central figure. Always a lively scene, that same drawing-room; pretty women dressed to perfection, and a surrus of melodious voices, and a general gaiety of tone, make it one of the pleasantest places in London. If, however, as I have heretofore observed, American women dress more charmingly than English women, unluckily American men dress worse, and are far more awkward and ungainly than Englishmen. They are angular fellows, and have an absurd mania for black apparel. It may be laid down as an axiom of costume that none but handsome well-built men look well in black, and that a man who looks well in black looks immeasurably better in any other color.

There was no extraordinary excitement this evening—no lecture on Spiritualism or Mormonism or sexual equality or woman's rights. There was nothing save music and flirtation—both of which were going on merrily. Madame de Longueville found her fascinating friend gayly fencing with several gentlemen—one of whom, a young fellow of thirty-five, about six feet four, and as straight as an arrow, struck Madame as the handsomest man she had ever

seen. He was a soldier, evidently—a cavalry officer, Madame guessed, as she looked at his lithe proportions (he was standing with his back to an unused fire-place, in the Great British manner), and the splendid muscles of his shoulders, and his long reach of arm. Aye, and Madame guessed aright. It was fighting Charlie Trafford, the best swordsman in the English army, the man who cut down more Sepoys and Russians than any other. Standing erect, with his finely-shaped head thrown back, and the light curls of hair tossed carelessly away, there was a beautiful defiant boyishness about him. You could see that he would lead a cavalry charge in just the same gay mood that he would have gone down to play cricket at Eton. Fighting Charlie had but one fault—he was too impetuous, too much of the Rupert type. These brilliant swordsmen don't make good commanders-in-chief.

He was now gayly flirting with little Emily Sheldon. Madame joined the group, and was heartily welcomed by her little friend, and introduced to the various gentlemen who surrounded her. When she caught the name of Colonel Trafford, she thought she had solved a problem.

"Cecile's lover!" she said to herself. "And they suit each other well. I don't think I could do any thing to prevent that splendid fellow from having his way. He is too handsome."

His voice broke in upon her reflections.

"Now, Miss Sheldon," he said, "I'll tell you what we must do. The night is hot. I think there's thunder in the air. Ladies require refreshment. Iced Champagne is the proper thing—the question is, what Champagne do you prefer?"

"I shall leave it to you," said Emily.

"I vote for Heidseck. Waiter! a few bottles of Heidseck, and some fruit and biscuits and stuff. Now let us begin to spend the evening."

As he gave the order, another waiter handed him a letter on a salver. Madame's quick eye noted it. It was the very letter of Cecile's which that morning she had copied, and which was addressed to Miss Trafford. Waiters, I suppose, are accustomed to these little irregularities.

He went aside to a chandelier, read the letter with a pleasant smile on his face, and came back to his company. The easy way in which he threw back his light curly hair seemed to show that he cared nothing for difficulties. Madame could not help admiring him.

"That's the sort of man," she thought. "I'll help him, if I can do it safely. He will marry Cecile, I am certain."

The Heidseck was drunk—they had a gay evening—the *beau sabreur* was as brilliant as if there were to be a battle the next morning. The other men caught the infection, and the group was so joyous that all the other denizens of the drawing-room looked that way, and listened to the easy effervescent talk.

"Let us drink to our sweethearts!" cried Colonel Trafford, merrily. "Now, ladies, I must fill your goblets. I'm a lover in difficulties myself, and I mean to conquer them. Will you drink to my success, Miss Sheldon?"

"With pleasure. - But I thought I was to drink to my own sweetheart."

"And that isn't me. Oh, you cruel child! Why, I thought I was making a proposal in the most delicate manner possible."

"Well," said Miss Sheldon, "that is a sort of thing which can be done in a good many different ways; yours is new, at all events. The objection to it is, that a good many people might not understand it."

"That might sometimes be an advantage," remarked one of the other men.

"Shall we have some music?" asked another. "Miss Sheldon, you have not given us a song for many nights. Do be gracious this evening."

"Yes," said Colonel Trafford. "Music is the food of love. Love is lucky when you feed him with music, Miss Sheldon."

Hereupon the fair Emily went to the piano, and burst into song in the following fashion:

"Oh, braid thou lilies, maiden fair,  
Into the folds of thy dark brown hair,  
White as foam of the wide salt sea;  
Sing gay carols through field and street—  
Light be the dance of thy tiny feet:  
Love and Death do wait for thee

"Young Love waits his brow to rest,  
Glowing with life on thy ivory breast,  
When summer is high over wold and lea:  
He'll sing thee songs of the golden South;  
And the bitter sweet of his burning mouth  
In a thousand kisses shall cling to thee.

"Ancient Death, a masquer quaint,  
Waits till thy voice grow weary and faint,  
And thy foot no longer dances free:  
Then, where the shadows of yew-trees fall,  
And the river flows hush'd by the churchyard wall,  
To his clay-cold breast he foldeth thee."

"That's a little too pathetic for the Colossus Hotel," said Colonel Trafford. "Don't you think so, Madame de Longueville?"

"I do indeed," she replied. "I am not particularly fond of being reminded of the church-yard. *Après?*"

"You are right," said Colonel Trafford. "Miss Sheldon, you must certainly sing us something gayer, to relieve our melancholy."

Nothing loath, the little actress broke out in another style:

"Maidens who for merry  
Looks are worth a sonnet,  
Girls whose cheeks resemble  
Roses drowned in milk,  
Needn't wear a very  
Stunning sort of bonnet—  
Needn't make us tremble  
In luxury of silk.

"Loving thoughts pursue you,  
And your lips are kissable,  
And you're not ungainly  
(As no doubt you guess),

Therefore let me woo you,  
Dainty little Isabel,  
White-straw-hatted plainly,  
In a light print dress."

With songs of this sort, evidently the production of some American poet, Miss Sheldon enlivened the evening. But the pleasantest evenings come to an end, and by-and-by the gentlemen gradually dispersed. Madame de Longueville, whose ears were curiously keen, fancied she heard a low whisper of the word *Cremorne*. Possibly: it was a very hot evening.

The two ladies were left together. Madame had intended to ask Emily Sheldon's help in explaining the "Miss Trafford" problem. Accident had saved her the trouble, and she decided to say nothing to her friend on the subject. She was in the habit of keeping to herself her little bits of stray knowledge, aware from experience that they were sometimes useful and profitable.

Hence she had only to communicate to Emily her intention of travelling during the vacation, and to propose that they should go into Sir Alured Vivian's neighborhood. Miss Sheldon was delighted with the proposal.

"I shall have no engagements in town for a couple of months," she said. "I should like a change; and I think I have a right to ascertain from Sir Alured Vivian what his intentions are."

"I think so too," said Madame.

"But do you know," said Miss Sheldon, "I sometimes think Colonel Trafford is rather fond of me."

"Do you?" said Madame, much amused. "Well, he is younger and handsomer than Sir Alured."

"Younger, certainly—I don't call him handsomer. Sir Alured is a magnificent old fellow. And Colonel Trafford hasn't much money, I fancy."

"Ah, that's awkward. And you really think the Colonel likes you?"

"I have sometimes thought so. But a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I shall try what can be done with Sir Alured."

"You are quite right," said Madame. "Then you will go with me. I have to take one of my pupils with me, who can not go home for the vacation: she is a very quiet girl, about seventeen."

"Ah, I dare say we can make her useful."

The idea of Miss Sheldon's making the haughty Cecile useful rather amused Madame de Longueville.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A THUNDER-STORM AND A FUNERAL.

"The golden haze of the calendula  
Always upon that antique garden lay."

SURELY that must be love's flower which blooms in every calend. Its golden hue pervaded the garden at Broadoak Mill Farm from

month to month. Pretty Mary Ashow has reverted to her ancient habits; she makes tea for her father and John Grainger in the garden parlor at four o'clock; she as regularly as ever walks along the river margin with the farmer while he smokes his pipe; she now and then goes with John Grainger through the Avonside woods to the Cavern, and takes botanical lessons, which there is now no one to interrupt. The excitement has died away: Vivian and Earine are gone. The old times seem to have returned.

Yet have they not wholly returned. That, indeed, is in this world impossible. You come back, after but a year's absence, to the very same friends, dwelling in the very same house—yet, alas! they are not the same, any more than the grass on their lawn or the rivulet that murmurs through their garden.

"None twice has crossed the self-same stream;  
None twice has seen the self-same face:  
Change is the echo of our dream—  
The burden of our race."

John Grainger and Mary Ashow have both been altered by contact with Earine. John especially has grown manlier, and his intellect has widened. To pass from the region of mathematics and chemistry to the realm of poetry is no trivial migration. When a young fellow with any modicum of brain has once been with Miranda on her island, and with Rosalind in the Forest of Arden, he is wholly transfigured and transformed. He had not known before what sort of a world he lived in. He might know from astronomy that it is round, and from chemistry that its shining streams are made of oxygen and hydrogen: and yet all the while he knew nothing.

Since Earine gave advice gratis to her young friends, there had been less flirtation between them and closer friendship. Mary did not quite give up her merry teasing ways; but she saw how great a mistake she had made in flirting with Vivian, and she began to perceive that John Grainger was a good deal better than he looked.

So there went on between them a sober sort of wooing, never very ardent, seldom enlivened by Mary's ancient fluctuations of temper. It was quite serious, however, quite in earnest: but John Grainger was not an imaginative man, and Mary Ashow had somehow lost a good deal of her skittishness. There are infinitely numerous ways of love-making. Farmer Ashow saw very well what was going on, and was not displeased; fond though he was of laughing at John Grainger's studious habits, he recognized the young fellow's sterling qualities, and saw that he would make Mary a good husband, and the farm a good master. Not that the tough old boy meant to die just yet; but he loved his farm almost as much as he loved his daughter, and wished to have them both in safe hands.

Now it happened, one fine afternoon, that the two lovers pursued the same sylvan path that led toward the Cavern—the path along which

they were walking when they saw the famous spider orchis. They were rather quiet on that day. The woods were cool, but the air was sultry; and across the river the sunshine seemed to be scorching the unmoved foliage. And there was a dark dense cloud climbing the sky, indicative of a coming thunder-storm.

They were silent. Mary was somehow thinking about that former walk, where John's involuntary descent to the cliff had caused her to go on alone to the Cavern, where she had met Mr. Vivian, gay, gallant, and daring, ready to kiss her lips without the semblance of an invitation. She was contrasting in her mind that brilliant young gentleman, full of laughing devilry, with the white-haired ghost of him, pallid and helpless and devoid of intelligence, which she had nursed so long. It was a serious lesson to little Mary, and she was deeply pondering it as she tripped along the woodland path, taking two steps to John Grainger's single stride.

Her big lover also was meditating, but on quite another subject. He had that very morning received a letter which decided him to make a proposal to Mary at once. For this purpose had he induced her to come into the pleasant woods this hot afternoon. So they walked very silently under the big beech-trees, isolated in their own thoughts, and interchanging no words. As silently clomb the black thunder-cloud up over the sky, shutting out the sunlight, till the darkening air awoke Mary from her reverie, causing her to exclaim—

"Why, John, we are going to have a storm."

"We are indeed," he replied. "Let us hurry on to the Cavern."

But before they reached that curious excavation, the first big drops were slowly falling, and as they entered it the first flash of forked lightning came from the fringe of black cloud, and seemed to plunge into the opposite woods. Mary sat down upon the rocky seat. John Grainger stood looking through the loopholes upon the Avon—in ordinary times a sky-blue stream, now black as Cocytus. Meanwhile down came the storm, a torrent of hail and rain; and lightnings streamed from cloud to cloud, and zigzagged downward to the attracting woods; and thunder, peal on peal, almost deafened the two lovers.

"A nice day," thought John Grainger, "to make a proposal. Is it ominous? Are the Fates adverse? If so, confound the Fates!"

"You are not frightened, Mary?" he said.

"Oh dear, no. We must be quite safe here. And it is such a glorious sight."

It certainly was. As the storm grew, the air seemed full of lightning, and in that elevated spot they felt as if in the very midst of it. At the same time the peals of thunder grew louder and more frequent, so that there was a continuity of the elemental roar. Few natural phenomena are so sublime as a great thunder-storm: and its action on the atmosphere and on the brain produces an exhilaration which confers double delight.

"I heard some news this morning, Mary, which I want to tell you," said John Grainger, after a few minutes' silence. "My uncle Henry is dead—my father's eldest brother; he was very old—over ninety; he was what they call a statesman in Westmorland, and his little farm comes to me. So I must go and attend the funeral, and see about the property—but I could not go without asking you a question first, Mary. Can you guess what it is?"

"Of 'course not," she said. "How should I?"

"Do you love me, Mary?" he asked, stooping to look into her eyes. "Will you be my wife?"

"You said you were going to ask me *one* question," she replied, in her old saucy way. "Why do you ask me two?"

"Will you say *yes* to both, my darling?" said John, who read her answer in her eyes, and took her into his arms and kissed her without further ado. In the young giant's embrace Mary Ashow felt quite like a baby—but she rather liked the feeling. Little women usually fly to the protection of somebody who is huge and strong.

The lovers sat happily enough in the cavern while the great storm crashed through the heavens. It was a tremendous tempest. Tree after tree in the Broadoak Avon woods was struck by the lightning, and found next day by the keepers and woodmen a charred and blackened ruin. But those woods were the scene of a worse disaster, which I have now to record.

"When *shall* we be able to get home?" said Mary. "Father will think we are lost."

"He will be sure that we have taken shelter somewhere," said John Grainger, rising to look through the loophole at the storm.

He started back with a strange sudden cry, pressing both hands to his forehead.

"What is it, my darling? what is it?" cried Mary, clinging to him.

"Wait a moment, love. I am dizzy. Let me sit down. The lightning flashed so close that it stunned me."

He sank upon the stone seat, and Mary pressed to his brow her fresh cool hands.

"Are you better, dear?" she murmured.

"I am dizzy, Mary. I shall be better in a few minutes, my love. How terribly dark it is!"

Yet at this very moment the day was brightening—for the great storm had spent itself with its last tremendous discharge—and the river Avon looked blue again, and the rain-drenched foliage began to show the loveliest green under the sunlight.

But that lightning-flash had blinded John Grainger. He could not understand it at first.

"Dark!" said Mary. "Why, John, it is growing quite bright and quiet. We can go home now."

"I can't see!" cried John, with a mighty groan, straining his eyeballs. "What can have happened to me? I can't see *you*, Mary."

And at length the lovers understood the terrible truth. But Mary was hopeful.

"The lightning has dazzled you, darling, that is all. Come home and have some tea, and, if you're not better, we'll send for the doctor. Come; I shall have to lead you."

So, slowly and not without stumbling, Mary Ashow led John Grainger home, and brought him to the summer parlor, where her father already awaited his afternoon refreshment.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Struck by the lightning and blinded! Sit down quietly, John. Take care of him, Mary, and give him some tea, while I go and fetch Dr. Mansford."

John Grainger sank into a chair, and Mary tended him very lovingly. Half an hour brought the doctor, who examined his eyes, and said he thought the blindness would be only temporary, but that the patient must live for the present in a darkened room. And he recommended them to consult a professional oculist.

"This is a sad business, John," said Farmer Ashow, when the doctor was gone. "But we'll hope for the best. We'll take thee to London to see this oculist."

"I ought to go to Westmorland directly," said John Grainger.

And then he told the farmer of his uncle's death, and that he ought to be at his funeral, and of what he had been saying to Mary.

"But now I am blind," he exclaimed. "You mustn't think any more of me, Mary dear."

"Do you think I'd give you up in your misfortune, John?" she answered.

"Of course not, Mary, my lass," said her father. "But we'll soon cure him. Pack up your things to-night, Mary. We'll all go to London to-morrow to see this gentleman Dr. Mansford recommends; and then, if it won't do him any great harm, John can go on to the funeral."

"But he can't travel all that long way alone, father."

"Well, I dare say we shall manage about that. Come, John, get off to bed early. Mary and I will manage every thing. Give him a kiss, lass."

Thus encouraged, Mary kissed her lover on the lips, and on the poor blind eyes, and the kind-hearted old farmer helped him to his room.

Once alone, the young man fell upon his knees and prayed—prayed almost desperately that this cup might pass from him, that his sight might be restored. Then, weary and perplexed, he got rapidly into bed, and slept from pure exhaustion. His brain was weakened by the sudden shock, and rest was welcome.

John Grainger, the most active of men, had been wont to awaken at sunrise. His room had windows to the east and south, and his bed was so placed that the earliest ray of dawn fell upon his pillow. But the next morning he slept late, and when he awoke it was to utter darkness. He thought it was still midnight. He had for the moment forgotten every thing. Painfully returned the remembrance of his woodland walk, of Mary's coy acceptance of his love, of

the cruel glare of light which drove him back from the narrow window of the Cavern. The trouble seemed too great to be endured.

He sobbed aloud.

Then he felt upon his forehead a small cool hand, and Mary said,

"Don't cry, John. We are going to London, you know, to see the doctor. I will fetch father to help you to dress."

Dr. Mansford fully approved this promptitude of action. He bathed the young man's eyes with some cooling lotion, and caused them to be shielded with a green shade, and furnished the farmer with a letter of introduction to a skillful oculist. And so the three started for London—a place which Farmer Ashow detested, which his daughter had never seen, and through which John Grainger had only passed in travelling between Broadoak and his native county.

The interview with the oculist was encouraging. He was of opinion that no permanent injury was inflicted; that with time and care the organs would recover themselves; and that John Grainger might attend his uncle's funeral without risk. This opinion made Mary Ashow and her father cheerful and hopeful; but the sufferer himself was not so sanguine. He felt immured in a dungeon, beyond the reach of the sun's blessed light; he remembered the pleasant country sights—the deer on the meadows at morn, the kine waiting for the milkmaid, the water-lilies on the breast of Avon, the waves of ripening wheat swayed by the wind, the cool dairy at the farm with its wide shallow pans of milk, the big stable, where every horse knew him and loved him, the summer parlor in which they drank tea while the bees hummed in the garden outside—ah! should he ever see these dear sights again, and a myriad others like them? Above all, should he ever see Mary Ashow? These doubts depressed him, though his companions did their best to prevent it. And Mary often saw with a sad heart tears in his sightless eyes.

Farmer Ashow and his daughter accompanied John Grainger to Westmorland. The little farm which the Graingers had held for centuries lay in a warm valley amid the wildest fells; the house was a low stone building, with walls of prodigious thickness, and a thatched roof. They arrived only two days before that fixed for the funeral, and found that great preparations had been made. Old Henry Grainger was a patriarch of the dales, and it was expected that his funeral would bring together a great number of his friends in the two counties. So his house-keeper had made many pies of geese, mutton, and sweetmeats, had baked innumerable scones of barley and countless oatmeal cakes; had laid in an immense amount of material for ale-posses, and was now occupied in preparing the small wheaten loaves which it is the quaint old custom to give at a funeral—one for each guest to take home with him.

Although the house at Skelthwaite Farm was



low, it covered a good deal of ground. In some parts it was two stories high, in some only one; and the rooms were seldom on a level, and their floors slanted curiously. Ample space, however, there was for the accommodation of John Grainger and his friends. Indeed, it was proposed to find sleeping accommodation for some other visitors to the funeral, remote relations of the deceased, who were expected from considerable distances.

It was seven good miles across the fells to the little church where Henry Grainger was to be buried; yet, till within about a year, the old statesman had walked to divine service every Sunday, except when the snow made the way impassable. And so numerous were the stalwart mountaineers who came from all parts of the district to the funeral, that all the way the same set of bearers was not needed a second time. They filled the little church—a low stone building, without tower or spire or bells, and with mere arrow-slits for windows. Very sunny and bright was the day of Henry Grainger's funeral: but the inside of the church was as cold as a vault, and almost as dark.

The fine old dalesman was laid in his grave, and the soft earth mounded above him: and then the band of mourners returned to Skelthwaite, where goose-pies and mutton-hams and ale-possets awaited them. They had buried the oldest man and most famous "russler" in Westmorland.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### FIGHTING CHARLIE TRAFFORD.

"It's gude to be merry and wise,  
It's gude to be honest and true;  
And afore ye're off wi' the auld love  
It's best to be on wi' the new."

In the course of his correspondence with Cecile, all of which was carefully opened and copied, and the copies forwarded to M. Vionnet, it naturally happened that the name of the mistress of Teba House was mentioned. Thus did it flash upon Colonel Trafford that he had heard the name elsewhere, and he connected it with the Frenchwoman who had called upon Miss Sheldon at the Colossus.

"By Jove!" he reflected, "she's a curious sort of party to keep a school. Rather a wicked eye has that little Parisian; and perhaps Cecile is right in fancying her a *mouchard*. The question is, can I make it worth her while to throw over her employers?"

He hit upon what he considered an adroit idea. In his next letter he told Cecile that he had met a Madame de Longueville at the Colossus, whom he supposed to be the lady of Sydenham; that he did not think her at all like a *mouchard*, but a very pleasant person indeed; that she was so courteous and charming that he had serious thoughts of calling at Teba House, only he supposed it would hardly be correct; that at all events he should pay his court to

Madame, if he was so fortunate as again to see her at the Colossus, and should endeavor to enlist her sympathy with two unfortunate lovers.

Cecile, when she read this epistle, was a good deal surprised, and not particularly pleased. She had not seen Madame through the atmosphere of flirtation, gossip, and Heide-seck; she felt sure that the woman was a spy, and in the pay of her persecutors. So she replied rather indignantly—proving to Master Charlie what he probably knew before, that she had a temper of her own.

But, as we know, Cecile was not the first to read Colonel Trafford's letter. Madame read it, and was rather taken aback.

"What shall I do?" she thought. "If that young man comes here, Vionnet will certainly know it. He and his spies do not leave me alone a moment, I am sure. Perhaps he already knows I have seen Colonel Trafford at the Colossus. I am not safe a moment. What am I to do?"

On one thing she resolved at once—not to send a copy of this letter to Vionnet. And, after considerable cogitation, she determined to pay an immediate visit to her friend Emily Sheldon, for the chance of seeing Colonel Trafford. She did not by any means know what she should say to the Colonel, or whether she dared say any thing; besides, she was in mortal fear lest her communications with him should be noticed, and suspicion should fall upon her. As Cecile was under espionage, it was hardly likely that Colonel Trafford should not be: more than likely that some member of the gay party which she had joined was employed to watch him. When she came to consider, there was a suspicious-looking man in the company, whom she at once set down as of her own profession.

It may be interesting to the reader to know that the person whom Madame suspected was a highly respectable old gentleman, member of all the best clubs in London, and peculiarly noted as a sayer of good things and a giver of good dinners. He belonged to the old school, and wore a blue coat with brass buttons—as he had done before the Prince of Wales was born: perhaps it was this antique costume which set Madame on a wrong scent.

Well, Madame went to town that very evening and dropped in at the Colossus. Emily Sheldon was well pleased to see her. The ladies' drawing-room was not very full, for there was some brilliant entertainment going on somewhere or other, and every body had gone thither—every body except Miss Sheldon, who, to say truth, cared very little about any entertainment, unless she was one of the entertainers. The little actress's character may be guessed from the fact that she had played—aye, and played well—several of Shakspeare's most piquant feminine creations, yet had never read through one of Shakspeare's plays.

The two ladies sat in a quiet corner of the immense room—a room all columns and mir-

rors, its walls painted in panel with female groups like the cartoons of some fashionable periodical—and gossiped quietly over a cup of chocolate.

"When do you think of starting for the Lakes?" asked Miss Sheldon.

"Very soon. My little girls will go home in a week, and then I am free. And very glad I shall be to get away from the monotonous work, and do as I please for a month or six weeks. Do you mean to go with us?"

"Yes," said Miss Sheldon, "I will go."

"And desert your Colonel," said Madame with a laugh.

"He will console himself. To tell you the truth, I begin to think the Colonel is a flirt, and not a marrying man at all. He goes on in pretty much the same way with every girl he meets."

"Ah! and you prefer Sir Alured. Well, the dear old baronet gave charming little dinners, and seemed singularly *éprouvé*. The way in which he disappeared was odd enough, but I dare say it will be cleared up in time. Possibly he will be as wild about you as ever when next he sees you."

"I don't know that I particularly want him to," returned Emily. "He has rather a fierce haughty sort of temper, which might be unpleasant in a husband."

"Well, he is a gentleman—and after what has happened he ought to behave generously to you."

Strange how human reptiles instinctively recognize a gentleman, and know that he can not be otherwise than generous, and without remorse abuse his generosity.

By-and-by the room began to fill, and several of the gentlemen who were in the habit of surrounding Miss Sheldon joined the ladies. Colonel Trafford was one of the last to do so. He gave Madame de Longueville a cordial welcome, being indeed extremely pleased to see her. The old gentleman whom she took for a spy was not present—whereat she rejoiced. As to the Colonel, the moment he saw her he said to himself, "She has read my letter, I'll bet a hundred."

The wily Colonel watched his opportunity, when Miss Sheldon was so busily engaged in flirting with a distinguished journalist that she thought of nothing else, and said in an undertone to Madame de Longueville:

"There is a young lady at your establishment in whom I am rather interested."

"Dear me! which of the little girls is it?"

"She is not a very little girl. It is Mademoiselle de Castelnau."

"Oh, she is a relation of yours?" said Madame, innocently.

"Not precisely. It is the story of Florio and Biancafiore reversed. You have read that story?"

Madame, being an Italian, had read that story.

"Cecile is sent to school because she wants

to marry me, and her friends would rather not. I mean to have her, for all that, you know," he continued with a toss of his shapely head, and a gay smile on his lips. "Will you help me, Madame?"

"I am engaged to do just the contrary."

"Ah, but you had not seen *me* when that engagement was made. Don't you think Cecil and I are just suited for each other?"

"I do, indeed. But listen." She went on in a whisper, "I can do nothing. I am in their power. You have no idea what they can do to me."

"Pshaw!" he said, "this is England—"

"Speak low, for the Virgin's sake!" she exclaimed, looking round with alarm.

No one seemed listening or noticing.

"Look here, Madame," he said, in a low earnest voice. "On the honor of an English gentleman, I will make you safe. Nothing shall happen to you. I will prevent it."

"You can not—you can not," she whispered.

"Can I not? you will see. Come, the heat and excitement are too much for you: we will have some Champagne. But tell me just one thing before I order it. Where do you mean to take Cecile for the vacation?"

"To the Lakes. Emily is going. Don't say any more, I implore you. I will write."

"Egad," thought Trafford, "she's seriously frightened. Clearly she's a *mouchard*. I wonder what those confounded police do to the spies that betray them."

The Champagne arrived, and the conversation grew general. But Colonel Trafford did not take a leading part in it. Madame's manner caused him to reflect. Her alarm, he could see, was sincere and profound; and the way in which she looked round showed that she imagined herself watched by some other *mouchard*. Yes, it was *la haute police*. He knew what was his Cecile's high rank, what her enormous fortune; he knew the immense power and influence of the great house which desired to annex her property by marrying her to a cadet; and now he saw that a careful and complex system of espionage was established around them. Madame's presence showed that his letters were read; Madame's conduct showed that she thought herself under surveillance. Against all this enginery what chance had he—a simple English gentleman and soldier, Trafford of Trafford?

English gentlemen are not easily frightened, however—specially when they are in love. Fighting Charlie felt himself a match for all the princes and spies that the stormy heat of revolution engenders in the mud of the Seine. When Madame de Longueville presently rose to leave, he saw her to her cab, and said, ere it drove away,

"Remember your promise."

Returning, he found that the piquant American had not yet left the drawing-room. He staid out the rest of the circle, and then took an opportunity of mentioning Madame.

"Have you known her long?" he asked.

"A few months only—I met her here by accident—just as you and I met, you know," she added, laughing.

"That last was a happy accident," he said. "Madame de Longueville tells me you are going to the Lakes together. When shall you start?"

"In about ten days, I think. It depends on her. I am ready at a few hours' notice."

"Let me know when you go, and to what part of the Lakes. A friend of mine has some grouse shooting in Cumberland, and has asked me to join him. It would be so pleasant to meet you in that delightful country."

"Oh, yes," she answered. "But see, we are positively the last two in the room, and they want to put out the gas. I *must* run away. Good-night."

Away she scudded, like a nymph of Theocritus, delighted at the idea that Colonel Trafford thought of following her, yet puzzled as to how his doing so might complicate her relations with Sir Alured Vivian.

Meanwhile Colonel Trafford lighted a cigar in the atrium, and, late though it was, walked up and down for an hour in the summer moonlight, thinking of Cecile, and pondering the difficulties of the situation.

"I've got to take the Quadrilateral with a rapier," he said, at last, and went in to bed.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"Happy's the wooing  
That's not long a-doing."

In the old Skelthwaite farm-house, after the funeral of Henry Grainger, there was a very quiet time. John Grainger, with a green shade over his blinded eyes, walked about the place with Mary Ashow as his guide. Farmer Ashow examined the farm—which did not take him long—and, having examined it, was puzzled what to do next to kill time. He had never seen such a farm. There wasn't a level acre anywhere. When he thought of the glorious pastures by Avonside, where a red ox of Hereford was almost buried in the lush grass—when he thought of his wide wheat-fields, already yellowing for harvest—this sterile bit of hill, where nothing could be grown save oats and barley, seemed hardly worth having as a farm. Yet John Grainger's uncle had lived upon it till he was nearly ninety-five; and this consideration caused Farmer Ashow to wonder. All his life he had lived in the prodigal profuseness of a southern county, by the happy margins of Severn and Avon, where the wheat swells in the summer sunshine, and the ox grows vast in loin upon the rich grass. That a living could be made on the side of a Westmorland fell astonished Farmer Ashow. He was quite in a new world. They couldn't grow big oxen

on that soil, but they could grow big men. It would have been difficult to find a man under six feet among the hundreds who followed old Henry Grainger to the grave.

John Grainger bore his affliction well; not stoically, but perchance heroically; yet there were times when it seemed to him intolerable. Then, if he could escape from Mary's loving companionship, he would rush away into a wild corner of his domain, where rose an icy spring which fed a stream that in course of time reached Windermere—and there he would fall upon his native turf, and cool his brow with the water of his ancestral spring, and pray to God for help. It was the old fable of Antæus over again. His own soil, his own spring—surely these were his best medicine.

Of course Mary found him out; of course she let him do this foolish thing. She would not interrupt him. She was wont to follow him afar off, and meet him quite by accident as he returned.

And on one occasion she took advantage of his absence to hold serious conversation with her father on a matter which greatly occupied her mind.

"Father," she said, "do you think John will ever get better?"

"I hope so," said the farmer, prudently.

"You know," she went on, talking very fast, and with a rosy flush on her pretty face—"You know I have promised to marry him."

"Of course, my child."

"Well, I want to fulfill my promise directly."

"Why?"

"I have two reasons, and both very good ones, father."

"Let me hear them, Mary."

"I want to be able to take care of him," she said, tearfully. "I want to be always with him, and comfort him in his great trouble. Poor John! he has lost his own eyes, I want him to have mine. I want to have a right to help him everywhere and in every thing. Will you let me? Think how terrible it must be for him not to see the cows in the meadows, and the wheat growing ripe—not to be able to look at the sky and guess what weather it will be to-morrow. How would you like it, father?"

"Well," said Farmer Ashow, shaking his head sagaciously, "I shouldn't like it at all. But do you think you could be of any use to him if ye were married, lass?"

"I am sure I could, father. Only think what a weary life it must be for him when he is alone, and how he must long for somebody to help him. It makes me quite miserable sometimes. Do let me have my way, father."

"You generally do have your way, my lass," said the old farmer. "But you told me you had two reasons, and I have only heard one as yet!"

The little girl did not reply for some time. At length she said,

"I don't quite know how to explain what I mean, father. But I want John not to think

that we are waiting to see whether he will get better. I want to marry him now, because you see I shall always love him just as well, whether he is blind or not. Indeed I am not sure whether I don't love him rather better for being blind."

"You are a curious little girl," said Farmer Ashow.

"All women are curious, they say, father. But will you let me have my way?"

"Why, Mary, you know I will. You know I look upon John as my son already. Marry him when you will, I'm content. I'd rather you should marry him, blind, than any other man I know with a dozen pair of eyes."

"Well, father, you'll have to tell him. I can't, you know."

"All right, my dear. I have no doubt he will be quite willing."

Farmer Ashow was rather out in his calculation. When he found John Grainger in a listening humor, and told him that his little sweetheart wanted to marry him at once, John wouldn't hear of it.

"She shall not sacrifice herself to me," he exclaimed. "I am blind. I am useless. I love her above every creature in the world, and therefore I will not accept any such sacrifice. I must live alone."

"You're a d—d fool, John," said the farmer, with emphasis on the expletive.

"Why?" asked John Grainger.

"Why! You love my daughter, and my daughter loves you; but, because you happen to be blind for the time, you won't marry her. Suppose 'twas the other way. Suppose she had the small-pox, and it spoilt that pretty face of hers: you'd want to marry her still, wouldn't you? And what would you think of her if she refused?"

"It's quite different," said John Grainger.

"It's exactly the same," said Farmer Ashow. "I'm a plain old south-country farmer, but I think I know what true love means. If my old wife had had the small-pox, I should have loved her every bit as well, and perhaps have pretended to be a little bit kinder to her; and if I had been struck blind, or had my leg broken, or any thing of that sort, my old woman would have loved me all the more for it. Now, don't you make any pretense to being different from other people."

"I make no such pretense," said John Grainger, "but it seems hard that my darling Mary should marry a man who is good for nothing."

"You are a young fool," said the farmer. "I thought you were a clever fellow, but I've altered my mind. You think Mary loves you: is it only your eyesight that Mary loves? And besides, is a man good for nothing because one of his senses is out of order? Hang it! if I were deaf and dumb as well as blind, I wouldn't give up as you seem to do."

"Do you really wish me to marry her?" asked John Grainger. "You know I love her—

or if you do not, she does. But it seems so horribly selfish. Is it right?"

"Right!" said Farmer Ashow, "of course it is right. You love her, and she loves you; any accident that happens to either of you doesn't matter, so far as I can see. I advise you to make up your mind at once. The child loves you now, and will do any thing for you; but, if you treat her indifferently, very likely she'll think she's made a mistake."

"I love your daughter most heartily," said poor John Grainger, "but you must forgive me for not wishing to draw her into trouble. Darling Mary! the most loving and lovable creature in the world! Yes, Mr. Ashow, I love her very much, and it is for that reason I hate the idea of her making a sacrifice for me. But if it is no sacrifice—if she can indeed love me in my blindness—I shall be the happiest man in the world."

"Ask her," said Farmer Ashow. "I fancy I see her coming this way. But remember what women are; they love a man all the better because he is in trouble and unhappy."

I wonder where the old farmer learned this fragment of wisdom. I wonder where he learned the tact which induced him to get quietly out of the way. This he did, for which he deserves commendation: and John Grainger and Mary Ashow were alone for a while. And Mary ingenuously said,

"You will have me, John, won't you?"

And John said,

"My darling! I am so unhappy. What can I do?"

And Mary replied,

"Marry me, my own, and then you will have my eyes to help you. Then I shall be with you always, in all your troubles."

"Do you really wish it?" said John Grainger.

"I do indeed," said Mary Ashow. "And you ought to know that I do. And upon my word I think I ought to alter my mind at the very last moment, considering how cruel you have been to me."

"You must have your way, Mary," said John Grainger; "but it seems horribly selfish of me to consent."

"Selfish! You foolish boy! It is you who are selfish, in trying to deprive me of happiness. Do you think I should be happy if I were obliged to leave you alone in your blindness, with nobody to help you or comfort you? If you loved me as well as I loved you, you would not think of such a thing for an instant. The idea of expecting me to desert you at the very moment when you want me most!"

Well, it was settled, of course, and when Mary Ashow heard the banns published in the little dark church where the funeral service had been read for Henry Grainger, she rejoiced at heart. No longer had she any doubt whether she loved John Grainger—no longer any yearning for somebody of a type more elegant and refined. She had acknowledged John's excel-

lence before the terrible accident occurred; that accident made her understand how dear he was to her. And it brought her closer to him, making her necessary to him. When a woman finds that she can do for the man she loves what he can not do for himself, what a delight it is to her! Don't you think Portia was a happy woman when she started for Venice to plead in that remarkable case, *Shylock versus Antonio*?

It may well be supposed that Mary's unselfish and unwearying love was to her lover a great consolation. Yet he had periods of bitter despondency. He had no great faith in the oculist's prediction that he should regain his sight. He pictured to himself long dreary, useless, sightless years; he saw himself growing prematurely old, unable to do the active work he loved, unable to see the country sights or the faces of his wife and children. Who can wonder that John Grainger, notwithstanding Mary's perfect love for him, was often moody and restless? Mary herself did not wonder; her kindness never varied; she forgave him all his irregularities of temper, and tended him with a pity more than angelic—the pity born of woman's purest love.

So it came to pass that the quaint old church which witnessed Henry Grainger's funeral witnessed also his nephew's marriage. Nor was this marriage unattended by the statesmen and farmers of the district. But of the concourse of wedding guests, of the wrestling and running matches, of the bride's sitting in state to receive in her lap the nuptial gifts, of the rustic festival and the dances which followed—dances not unaccompanied by innocent kissing—I must not yet speak.

For there came to that wedding an unbidden guest, who somewhat surprised Farmer Ashow. Whence he came, and who he was, shall be made known in due time.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A VACATION IDYL.

"Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer echoes, dying, dying, dying."

BLACKWATER, the lake into which Hawksmere Ghyll descends, though wondrous wild at its upper end, becomes softer in the character of its scenery as you go southward. A couple of miles down, on the side opposite to Hawksmere, there is a beautiful lawn opening; and at this point some speculator has built what he calls a villa—a comfortable eight-roomed cottage, with fantastic gables and chimneys and balconies—which he lets furnished during the season at a tremendous price. Prices have enormously increased in this beautiful district since first I knew it, twenty years ago; for there has been an ever-augmenting influx of "swells," since the railway times, into the poetic region where poets could once find loneliness.

The villa of which I speak is in the winter

scarcely visible for the mists of the lake; but in summer it is a very pleasant sunny little place, with cool shade of lofty laurels and hollies on its lawn, and mountain ash dipping its red clusters of berries into the very water. Madame de Longueville chanced to see this place advertised in the "Times," and, looking at the map, was enchanted to find that it could not be very far from Sir Alured Vivian's residence; so she went to town, called on the house-agent, and took the villa at once. So, one hot afternoon, the three ladies, weary and dusty with long travel, reached the margin of Blackwater in one of the queer ugly conveyances which are specially contrived for the hilly, stony Cumbrian roads. Right glad were they to take possession of their chambers, and cool and refresh themselves. Madame, having superadded to her bath a cigarette and a glass of curaçoa, felt in high spirits when she descended to the parlor.

"This is really charming!" she exclaimed, as she came through the open window to the lawn, where the two younger ladies were already established. A handmaiden had brought a table out under a drooping ash-tree, and on a white cloth were the materials for the manufacture of tea, together with a mutton-ham, and plates of crisp thin oatmeal cakes, and cool butter, and a great bowl of wild strawberries, and another bowl of the thickest cream.

"Yes, it really is charming," echoed the little American. "Your choice does you credit, Louise. If we don't have a good time here, it will be our own faults—don't you think so, Cecile?"

Mademoiselle de Castelnau had not yet quite made up her mind whether to like or dislike this vivacious Miss Sheldon. She had no notion that she was an actress, and supposed that her easy, familiar manners were usual in American society. She gave languid assent to Miss Sheldon's question.

So they sat down to their refection, this curious trio, and enjoyed it immensely. To the Southern epicure, oatmeal cake, smoked mutton-ham, mountain strawberries and cream may appear any thing but ladylike luxuries; but these three ladies found them very nice indeed. And to sit on a sunny lawn, with a lake dancing and sparkling a few yards away, and huge fells rising into the air on all sides, and a sweet sequestered silence everywhere, was a pleasant change from the Sydenham school-room and the Colossus drawing-room.

"We want only one thing," said Madame, laughing. "We want a few gentlemen to drop in upon us occasionally."

"Aye, indeed," exclaimed Miss Sheldon. "But I'm afraid there are none in the neighborhood. I declare I shall forget how to flirt by the time we go back again. What in the world shall we do all day? It is charming just at first, but we shall certainly quarrel if we don't find employment. Can you fish, Cecile?"

"No, indeed. I shall read Tasso, and sketch a little."

"Oh, I shall fish," quoth Miss Sheldon, "if I can get a rod and line anywhere. And oh, I do hope there's a punt to be had. It is so jolly to sit in a punt in the water all through a summer day catching fish."

She ran down to the water's edge, and then came rushing back in a state of delight, clapping her hands.

"Yes, I declare there is a punt, and a pair-oar. Can you row, Louise?—can you, Cecile?"

The replies were negative.

"Oh what muffs! I must teach you. Then we can get into the boat and explore all the neighborhood. And of course you can't swim. I can, like a mermaid; and I've brought down a delightful bathing-dress. Come, Madame de Longueville, you are deposed. I shall be school-mistress now, and teach you both to swim, and to fish, and to row."

"I will be your pupil," said Madame.

"And so will I," said Cecile, who was exhilarated, in spite of her hauteur, by the American's sprightly chat.

"You had both better set to work and contrive yourselves some bathing-dresses," she said.

"You shall see mine." And away she ran to find it.

A charming costume. A blue tunic, with sleeves reaching about half-way to the elbows, and gray trowsers—Emily called them pantalletes—reaching to about the knees.

"Every lady her own tailor!" she exclaimed.

"This is the sort of thing, Louise. Come, you must both manufacture something of the kind."

Carried away by Emily's enthusiasm, Madame and Cecile both instituted a search for materials: and that evening was busily devoted to making dresses for the water. Both ladies wanted to make the sleeves and the trowsers longer: but Emily declared that she was mistress, and wouldn't allow it.

"You must learn to swim," she said. "You can't swim with a lot of loose damp drapery coming down to your wrists and ankles."

"But this style exhibits a good deal more than the ankles," remonstrated Cecile.

"Why, there is no one to see it in this lonely place. Except for the name of the thing, one need not dress at all. Now don't be nonsensical, but make the things so that you can use them."

They complied, and the costumes were made. Next morning, at about six, Madame de Longueville, who loved her bed, was awakened by Emily Sheldon's throwing stones at her window; looking out, she saw the little actress, her round arms and shapely legs white in the sunshine, towel in hand, ready for the water.

"You and Cecile come down as soon as you can, and I'll give your lesson. I'm going to take a header myself first."

Away she ran down the lawn, punted out into the lake in as workmanlike a way as if she had been educated at Eton, and sprang from the punt into the water. Madame and Cecile watched her from their windows with admiration.

By the time they, clad in their new costume, came down to the water, Miss Sheldon had enjoyed her swim, and was waiting for them. A shore of fine shingle and small shells lay beyond the turf; the lake deepened very gradually; never was easier or safer place for a swimming-lesson, even on Southsea Beach itself. Emily did not find her pupils at first very successful: Madame de Longueville was rather too thin, and Cecile de Castelnau a good deal too tall. Still, it was a pleasant romp in the water, if nothing more.

Whoso has ever visited Trouville-sur-Mer, or any other French watering-place, has seen costume-bathing many a time; and highly picturesque it is. For my own part, I certainly prefer getting into deep blue water, and enjoying it without any encumbrances of apparel; but when the weather is sultry, and men, women, and children have nothing in the world to do with their time, why should they not spend a few hours in the water—dressed like mermen and mermaids of the very first fashion?

Miss Sheldon's suggestion gave great satisfaction, and the ladies breakfasted with terrific appetite after their dip. Breakfast over, what next? Madame made herself a cigarette, which the little American at once begged of her.

"I can't make cigarettes," she said. "Will you teach me?"

Cecile had already established herself on the lawn with her Tasso. Emily came running over to her, with her cigarette between her saucy lips.

"I am mistress here," she said, "and I don't allow Italian this morning. You are going to have a rowing lesson. Get your widest straw hat and your coolest dress."

Cecile obeyed. Meanwhile, Emily was off again to inquire of the servants whether fishing tackle could be obtained in the neighborhood.

"Hurrah!" she exclaimed, returning. "There's a little village a mile down the lake, and a little shop where I can buy what I want. We can get there by water. Now then, ladies, you'll have to work."

"Isn't it dangerous?" asked Madame anxiously.

"If you're born to be hanged, you'll never be drowned," exclaimed Emily, little thinking how terribly apposite was the adage.

Soon they got into the boat, Emily pulling stroke, and Cecile taking the other oar, while Madame was taught how to steer. The lake lay in a trance of calm. They got well out; and Cecile, after catching a crab once or twice, and falling into an undignified position, at which all three laughed immoderately, began to do her work very fairly. So in due course they reached the little village, a mere cluster of houses, and landed, and found their way to the village shop—an emporium of every thing in general, kept by a little shrivelled old man. Miss Sheldon purchased a rod and tackle, and selected flies with great judgment, and exclaimed,

"Now we'll soon have trout for breakfast."

"If ye want trout, my lasses, ye should get leave to try the tarn above Hawksmere," said the old man. "But ye'll scarce get leave, now the master's at home."

"Who lives at Hawksmere?" asked Madame.

"Old Sir Alured Vivian," he answered. "He's been there only a while, nursing his son that's ill."

"What sort of a place is it?" asked Miss Sheldon.

"Oh, a wild place. Every body goes to see the force. You'll find it a very pleasant row across the lake."

Among the contents of the old man's shop was a small circulating library, and Madame, who had with her but one book, "*Mademoiselle de Maupin*," thought she would see what English novels were like. But, as in that remote corner they had not heard of Mudie, the literature to be found there was not of the newest. Madame carried away with her "*Tom Jones*" and "*Pamela*." As they sauntered back to their boat, the little American said,

"Now I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll take the punt out into the lake, and you shall read, Louise—and you shall sketch, Cecile—and I'll catch trout. That's the programme, lasses—for it seems we're all lasses up here. So now let's us row home and get some lunch. Cecile, you will steer this time. Louise must have her lesson."

Cecile was a good deal surprised at Madame de Longueville's having so completely laid aside the manners of a schoolmistress. She was unaware of Colonel Trafford's compact with her, for that gentleman looked forward with a certain amount of pleasure to taking his lady-love by surprise. From the commencement of their excursion Madame had thrown away her Sydenham dignity, and treated her pupil as an equal. Even had there been no understanding with the Colonel, I do not quite see how she could have done otherwise in the society of the free-and-easy American.

A capful of wind had sprung up while the ladies were ashore; and, as they rowed towards the villa, they saw astern a white sail caught by the breeze, and a red flag flaming against the green hills.

"Ah," said Emily, resting on her oar, "I wish we had a sailing-boat. That's the way to fly along the water. But I expect the winds down from those hills are dangerous."

"It looks very pleasant," said Madame; "and really rowing is rather hard work."

The tiny yacht overhauled them pretty fast, and they could see, as it passed them, that there was only one person on board, who lay back in the stern smoking a mighty meerschau. The boat passed them on the Hawksmere side of the lake, then suddenly made a tack, and shot across their bow, apparently towards their own villa.

"I declare," said Miss Sheldon, "I believe we are going to have a visitor. Pull away, Louise: don't be lazy. I am quite curious to know who it can be."

When they reached home, there was the little yacht, with its sail furled, lying at their landing-place, and a fierce little otter terrier was keeping guard over its cargo, which consisted of a silver bugle and the huge meerschau aforesaid. But the yachtsman—where was he?

The question was quickly answered. As the boat ran upon the shingle, a tall gentleman in a blue serge coat and white flannel trowsers came down the steps to help them ashore. Every body recognized him at once. It was Colonel Trafford.

Madame had of course expected to see him, but not so soon. She had kept her promise, and written to him on taking the villa. He, having nothing to keep him in town, started at once for the north, took up his quarters at the Ferry Inn at Hawksmere, and had been on the lake ever since watching for their arrival. Thoroughly amazed was Cecile de Castelnau to see her gallant lover. Somewhat surprised—and not entirely pleased—was Emily Sheldon to discover that there was a previous acquaintance between the Colonel and Cecile.

"Will you give me some luncheon, Madame?" The world is full of coincidences, you see; we part in London, and meet on Blackwater. Who is going to catch trout?" he asked, handing out the fishing-rod.

"I am going to try," said Miss Sheldon. "Will you punt us out after luncheon? Louise is to read, and Cecile to sketch, while I fish."

"And what am I to do?"

"Smoke, I suppose, or else play airs from *Der Freischütz* on that wonderful bugle I saw in your boat. Of course there must be an echo among these hills."

"A million. When I play a note or two, there come such a multitude of ghostly bewildering sounds as would frighten any body at all nervous."

"Come, Emily," cried Madame, "let us go in to lunch."

"How in the world did you find us out, Charlie?" asked Cecile, the moment she got a chance.

"Why, your severe instructress told me, of course," said the Colonel. "I said she was not such a very bad sort."

"I don't like her," said Mademoiselle de Castelnau, thoughtfully.

"Do you like Miss Sheldon?"

"I hardly know. Pretty well, I think. She is very lively and cheerful."

"Did you know that she is an actress?"

"No, indeed. I should think she would make a very good actress in comedy."

"Very fair," he replied. "And now, Cecile, tell me you are glad to see me."

"No need for that," she said, with a happy smile. "How you got over Madame I can't think, for I am sure she is a spy upon me."

"So am I," he said. "Never mind. My little school-girl has got her holidays now, and I am going to help her spend them pleasantly."

Luncheon over, Colonel Trafford got out the punt, and the party were soon in a state of busy idleness. Madame was deep in "Pamela;" Cecile tried to sketch the villa; the Colonel smoked; while Emily Sheldon threw her fly with much "skill and dexterity." Nor was she unrewarded. In about half an hour she got a bite, and it was evidently a biggish fish, for the rod bent to its utmost. The Colonel put down his pipe, and picked up a landing-net: the other ladies gave up their own occupation, and watched the battle between the angler and her fish with immense interest.

"I fear I can't land him from the punt," said Emily.

"No," said the Colonel. "The water's not deep here: I can wade."

So he got overboard and took the rod, and finished the hapless fish. It was a splendid fellow.

"What a beauty!" cried Emily, delighted. "He'll weigh ten pounds, at least."

"More," said the Colonel. "This is a famous beginning, Miss Sheldon."

"Ah," she said; "but the honor and glory is half yours. I wish I had landed him."

"He might have pulled you into the water," he said, laughing.

"Oh, I'm not afraid, I can swim. But it is so inconvenient fishing in petticoats. I must invent an angling costume."

Then Colonel Trafford played on his bugle a jubilant air in honor of the big trout; and the hills were suddenly filled with a mad mockery of the music—as though the nymph Echo had married, and become the mother of a numerous family of boisterous children.

When the afternoon's indolent enjoyment was over, and the sunset was turning the lake into a sheet of molten gold, Colonel Trafford took leave of the ladies, and his tiny yacht was soon a mere white speck in the amber mist. But he was to come again to-morrow, and stay all day, and dine with them upon the famous trout. The three ladies watched his white sail till it vanished in the distance; as it vanished, they heard the clear note of the silver horn, sending across the magic mere a cheery farewell.

Not quite cheerful was either of the three. Miss Sheldon of course perceived her mistake about the Colonel, and was cross with herself for having made it. Clearly, he and Cecile understood one another, and his flirtation with her meant nothing. She was heart-whole, since she hadn't any particular amount of heart; but she was a little disgusted, notwithstanding.

Cecile, on the other hand, was somewhat disposed to be jealous of Emily. She wanted to have her lover all to herself, which was quite impossible with the vivacious little actress in company.

But Madame had the best reason for being dissatisfied. She knew she was in peril. Obeying orders, she had reported to her superiors what she had done; and she felt sure that she would be watched at Blackwater as strictly

as at Sydenham. When it was known that Colonel Trafford was there also, what would happen? Madame began to regret that she had so easily given way. She dreaded hourly an encounter with the stealthy Vionnet. She had now no correspondence between Cecile and her lover to forward to him, and its absence would certainly awaken his suspicion. Should she invent such a correspondence? It would not be safe. Colonel Trafford's being in the neighborhood must inevitably be discovered, in which case her supposititious letters to him would at once prove complicity against her.

Hence every day poor Madame was in a state of nervous apprehension, and could not thoroughly enjoy the bathing and boating, or the calm lotos-life in the punt, when Emily caught trout, and Cecile sketched, and she herself endeavored to follow the virtuous Pamela in her struggles to escape from her wicked persecutor. Every figure on the distant shore assumed for her the shape of Vionnet. She partially confided in Colonel Trafford, who did his best to reassure her, declaring that if any one appeared to annoy her, he would throw him into the lake.

A sail in Trafford's Lilliputian yacht was a great delight to the ladies; and many a time they passed beneath Hawksmere, and Emily looked up towards the quaint old house, and wondered when she should see Sir Alured. She wanted to meet him accidentally, and judge by his conduct of his feelings towards her. This seemed altogether unlikely; he was still shut up with his son, she heard, and never left the grounds of Hawksmere; and she did not feel the slightest inclination to intrude upon the old man's solitude. However, she did not worry herself; she was happy enough, bathing and fishing, rowing and sailing.

Cecile, doubtless, was happier still with her Colonel. She was a quiet child, and, if he were present, was content, without caring for much interchange of talk. Emily chattered enough for the whole party. Meanwhile, the Colonel himself was trying to hit on some method of marrying his lady-love without causing a deuce of a row, or getting Madame into any great amount of trouble.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE CHICARD EXPERIMENT.

"Whither is fled the visionary gleam?"

THAT Dr. Chicard was an empiric can not be denied in this veritable history. Are not all physicians empirics? Did not a learned member of the order commence at Paris a course of lectures on the science of medicine with the words, "Gentlemen, there is no science of medicine?" Can it be otherwise, while we are wholly ignorant of the nature of life—an ignorance which will last as long as life itself? Most of our specifics have been discovered entirely by accident: it was not by any scientific



process that men found out the admirable qualities of opium, of quinine, of chloroform.

Dr. Chicard's practice, hitherto singularly successful, was based on a chance discovery. A young girl was terribly frightened by the explosion of a powder-mill half a mile from the house in which she lived, and fell into a state of catalepsy. The doctor, at that time a young provincial practitioner, could do nothing for her; and, of course, did it in the most approved way. But it so happened that, after she had been in that state for some months, there was a second explosion at the same mills, and it aroused the girl from her trance. It was a new phase of the homeopathic theory. Dr. Chicard instantly formed the idea of trying the experiment with cataleptic patients (who for some unassigned reason are more numerous in France than in England), and, as I have said, achieved success.

After a patient study of Vivian's condition, he determined to see what could be done. It was necessary to have Earine's assistance, and therefore it was likewise necessary to tell Sir Alured Vivian her story. The old baronet still unsuspectingly regarded her as the most obliging and gentle young sailor that ever did the duty of a nurse. When Dr. Chicard told him what he knew of her history, he was perfectly amazed.

"These women are too cunning for us, doctor," he cried. "They cheat us, whatever precautions we may take."

"But, Sir Alured, she must be a brave girl to do this. See how gallantly she has followed your son, and how tenderly she has nursed him."

"True enough. There are some women, I suppose, who are not altogether selfish and cruel. Well, what am I to do with her?"

"I am going to make valuable use of her. To-morrow I shall try the process which I hope will cure your son. You must not be present; it is important that, if he should, as I hope, regain consciousness, he should see this girl first of any one."

Sir Alured having consented to the proposal, Dr. Chicard had a talk with Earine. Did she remember what she wore when Vivian shot the ruffian who insulted her? She must put on something of the same color and shape. In this there was no difficulty. Earine had always kept as a sacred relic the crocus chitonion in which she had first been brought into the presence of her master; and though there was not much room in her knapsack, it had accompanied her to Hawksmere. 'Twas grown tight for her; the girl's shoulders had assumed a fuller curve, her breast a riper form; still, she could manage to wear it.

It was possible to select, in those gardens of Hawksmere sloping to the lake, a scene not unlike that in the Ægean island. There was a terrace on which Dr. Chicard intended to place his patient: considerably below it was another terrace, on which he artistically ar-

ranged a scarecrow in a state of collapse, looking very like a man just shot. There Earine was to stand, in crocus tunic, with her face looking up towards Vivian.

At noon—for the Doctor wished to repeat even the time of day at which the incident took place—Vivian stood by the wall of the higher terrace. A rifle had been provided, with a double load of powder in it. This Dr. Chicard placed in his unresisting hands, with its barrel on the wall. Earine was waiting below. The Doctor guided Valentine's hand to the trigger, caused him to pull it, and instantly started back into the concealment of a laurel-tree.

The explosion caused Vivian to tremble all over, as a tree trembles in every little leaf when suddenly caught by an eddy of the storm. He grasped the rifle—he leaned over the wall—he saw—yes, he saw the beautiful face of the Greek girl looking up to him in the sunlight. He exclaimed,

"Don't leap, Earine!"

That tragedy of a moment, enacted years before, came back to him; and when Earine, hastily ascending the steep path, joined him on the terrace, he spoke to her at once.

"There's an end of that ruffian," he said.

Dr. Chicard kept out of the way. He had told Earine what to do, in the event of his experiment being in any degree successful. She was to take him into the largest room in the house—a kind of old-fashioned hall—and cause him to take some refreshment. Cold provisions and flasks of wine were on the table, and Vivian actually ate with an appetite.

"I am weak and tired, Earine," he said, after a while, drinking a great draught of Chamberlain from a silver tankard.

("Plenty of good Burgundy for his blood and brain, if we get him out of the trance," Dr. Chicard had said.)

"You will soon be better now," she answered.

"Oh, I'm well enough, but I feel weak and rather stupid. Where are my cigars? Get me one, Petale. Then you shall read me some Homer."

Even this had not been forgotten. "He will be sure to want me to read Homer," Earine had said, and so a Homer had been got from Kendal.

"Ha, this is pleasant," he exclaimed. "Read about Nausikaa, my favorite passage."

So she began, and read, as only a Greek maiden could, how Athene, like a breath of wind, entered the painted chamber where slept the princess, with two beautiful handmaids on each side the portals—and how, disguised as one of her girl-friends, she urged her to wash her garments in the shining stream. Vivian listened, and was calm; he beheld in a vision the just-awakened daughter of Alcinoüs, and gray-eyed Athene returning through the lucid ether to Olympus, the firm seat of the gods, never shaken by the winds, nor moistened by rain, nor approached by snow, but overspread

with a cloudless serenity, and surrounded by a white splendor.

Vivian's illness had left him in such a state of lassitude that, as Dr. Chicard anticipated, he took no notice of any thing except Earine. Her presence sufficed for him. His brain was not active enough to cause him to consider where he was, or how he came thither. The doctor, who had so arranged a screen in the old hall that he could creep in quietly and observe the state of affairs, felt well satisfied, and went to report to Sir Alured.

"Your son," he said, "must be left entirely in charge of Earine for the present. He should see nobody else. How fortunate she was here! Without her I could have done nothing."

Misogynist though he was—for the time at least, the old baronet was obliged to submit.

Vivian's feeling of lassitude rendered him glad enough to go to bed that night. Earine watched an hour or two at the door of his chamber, and felt satisfied that he was peacefully asleep. And when she went to her own room—little Pagan though I fear she was—she fell on her knees, and heartily thanked God for Vivian's restoration. I believe that thanksgiving was accepted, whatever conception she might have formed of the Divinity.

At sunrise next morning she was watching for Vivian. He, however, slept late; but when at last he came into the corridor, Earine could see that there was a fresh light in his eye, and that he moved with more of his own vigor. How happy she was! How delighted to see his relish for the pink-fleshed trout, the strawberries of Lilliput, the generous Chambertin! After breakfast she proposed a sail; and they descended together to the lake. Hawksmere had a landing-place of its own, so that they did not approach the village; but the good news had reached the Ferry Inn, and as the swift boat flashed out into the lake, under the skilled guidance of Earine (still wearing the crocus chitonion, though it was no longer, as in the Greek isles, her only garment), there was a small crowd watching on the shore; and good Mrs. White took much credit to herself for having befriended the sailor-lad that was a lass, after all.

Day after day they passed upon the lake, and Valentine Vivian's intellect gradually grew clearer. One day he said to Earine:

"How long have I been ill?"

She told him, dating his illness from Lady Eva's death.

"It must be longer than that," he said, musingly. "I remember nothing clearly since we were in the island together. I seem to have had a long dream of trouble and death. It is very strange."

"The dream is over now," replied Earine.

"I hope so. But tell me, Earine, where am I? Hitherto I have not had energy enough to ask."

"This is Blackwater, in Westmorland. The house is Hawksmere, one of your father's houses."

"And is my father here?"

"Yes."

"Ah, I must see him. I have not seen him for years."

That afternoon, on their return, Earine reported the conversation to Dr. Chicard, who was delighted.

"He is cured now," he exclaimed. "I will go and tell Sir Alured Vivian."

Father and son met that day. A strange contrast. The father, tall, leonine, with a mane of iron-gray hair, and a steel-blue eye that was full of fire; the son a well-built light-weight, with hair blanched to the color of snow by suffering, and with an eye once quite as keen and fiery, but now clouded with the mists of vision. He who has passed, like Thomas of Ercildoune and Bonny Kilmeny, into Dreamland, never again can look upon this parlor-and-kitchen world with eyes that only reflect or that only pierce.

What an opportunity for a

#### CHAPTER ON EYES,

if only I had the genius of one Lawrence Sterne! There's the eye that simply reflects—a mere retina, a mirror and no more. People with that sort of optical instrument go through the world without a suspicion of its mystery and its magic. They look with equal interest on an oak and an omnibus, unaware that the oak has its Dryad, and the Dryad perchance her Rhaiaces. They see no Dryads, bless your heart! nor any Naiads with soft soluble limbs in wandering waters, nor any ghosts in grim old houses, though ancient unholy murders be photographed on their walls. Worse than that, they never see their wives and children. They perceive fine well-dressed female animals, and jolly young cubs of their own race, but the divinity of womanhood and the mystery of childhood, are alike beyond their ken.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar."

This great utterance would sound like sheer nonsense to men with what may be called looking-glass eyes.

Nor are the fellows much better who possess eyes that pierce. They can tell a rogue from a fool—that is all; a good useful quality in a world like this. They are like men who have lived always in broad day—who have never seen even-gloams or moonlight. But a man whose eyes are of the highest service to him is he who can see beyond the mere outer husk of things; who can discover the nymph in the oak, and catch the fairies dancing in the moonlit woods, and look beyond the region of hard fact into the realm of dreams.

Is it Thackeray who says that if some women's eyes were dragged a good many dead bodies would be found in them? Ah that I could write a chapter on ladies' eyes! The passionate black eye, the loving limpid brown, the dreamy blue, the scintillating hazel—and

then those wicked eyes of dark emerald, so rare, so ravishing, so full of changeable meaning. But I dare not as yet touch that difficult, delicate topic. Who knows? Perchance I may gather courage before this book is ended.

Sir Alured and his son had to make each other's acquaintance again: but it was soon accomplished, for they were well in accord on essential points, though there were many accidental differences. Both were chivalrous and romantic; both were lovers of the sex; both were haughtily indifferent to the opinions of other men; both were of the poetic temperament, though the son only possessed the poetic faculty; both were as generous as the sunshine, and as courageous as—English gentlemen. They were much of the temper of Sir Thomas Wyatt of Arlington, the true founder of our modern English poetic style. 'Twas his mother, by-the-way, who put the Abbot of Boxley in the stocks for certain improprieties committed in her household: and when the matter came before the Privy Council, his father said that if it had been one of their lordships she would have done the same. As to the poet, he kept a young lion and a greyhound together; and once on a time the whelp flew at him; but the greyhound sprang on the creature's back, and Sir Thomas ran his rapier through him.

"Aye," said King Henry, when he heard of it, "Wyatt can tame lions."

Well, these two men, father and son, were much of the lion-taming sort, but they could not tame themselves. And it is the destiny of men of this kind, indomitable spirits, to be worried by circumstance. Many a noble heart is well-nigh broken, because what we call luck is always against him—because at every step he is baffled by the malignity of fate. "God is good," but luck is hard," says the Greek poet. The neologists who deny the existence of a devil are surely wrong: it must be some mischievous, malignant, ill-conditioned fiend that warps the ways of Providence, and brings perpetual misfortune to men in whom are united virtue, beauty, wisdom, courage, and strength. Whom the gods love, die young: whom the fiends hate, fight hard.

At this period Sir Alured Vivian and his son Valentine began to understand each other. They had been running in separate grooves: now that they were brought together they magnetized each other. Indeed, for a few hours, even Earine fancied herself neglected; but the loyal little soul was wholly unselfish, and rejoiced to see father and son re-united. The child loved Vivian so perfectly that his happiness was all she desired to make her happy. I know that this abnegation of self will appear weak and foolish to any young ladies who may do me the honor to read these volumes: but then you see she was an uneducated and unfashionable little Greek, and didn't know any better. 'Tis a fact, indeed, that she contemplated the possibility of Sir Alured's sending her away, so that she should never see Valen-

tine again; and she would imagine herself in some solitary corner of the world, living through long monotonous years, with but one thought in her heart—that the man whom she loved was well and happy.

Gradually the remoter events of the past returned to Vivian's memory, and he was able to narrate to his father all that had occurred up to the time of his sun-stroke. But of what happened afterwards his recollections were vague and perplexed; he could not separate reality from imagination, and Sir Alured would not allow him to torture himself by futile attempts to reduce to a defined form these hazy reminiscences.

The old baronet was delighted with the story of Earine, and of the divine Greek islet, with its dwelling hewn in the marble cliff, and of the swift-flying yacht wherein they voyaged over the sapphire sea.

"She is like one of Homer's women," said Sir Alured. "Your scene is like a fragment of the 'Odyssey.' Your Earine is a girl worth having. I am half jealous of you, Val."

"I must marry her, sir. She will bring something calmer and more classic to quiet the hot blood of the Vivians. And yet," he added seriously, "I suppose I ought not to marry, with a strange fever in my blood—a strange madness in my brain."

"Ask Earine's opinion," said Sir Alured, sentimentally. "And now let me tell you something that will amuse you. But for suddenly hearing of your illness, I should by this time have been myself a married man."

"The happy event is postponed?"

"Till Doomsday. I have recovered from the brief madness; but I had proposed, and had been accepted."

"And the lady?"

"A little American actress—the prettiest thing and the most complete coquette you ever saw in your life. Not a divine creature like your Greek, fit for Homer to describe with a single sonorous epithet—fit for Phidias to cut in marble of Marpessa; not a homely, honest, handsome, intelligent English girl, with all the undeveloped capacities for managing her house and bringing up her children; but a doll, a toy, a charming poppet, daintily dressed, who might have stepped out of Watteau's canvas, or from under a glass shade on a drawing-room table. It was an odd infatuation, Val; and just at the instant of the crisis Catelan brought the news of your illness, and I was suddenly cured."

"What do you mean to do about it?" asked Valentine.

"Make the child a handsome present," replied Sir Alured. "Give her a set of diamonds, perhaps. She will be content. It was merely a momentary speculation on her part."

"You did not think so at the time."

"No; I was blind, infatuated—saw in her all the best qualities of all the rare women that have existed in life or in poetry. But now I see more clearly, and am pretty well satisfied

that she will prefer the diamonds to me. So, Val, you are not at present destined to have a stepmother, whatever may happen when I get older and more foolish."

At this moment entered Dr. Chicard, who was about to take his leave, having received from Sir Alured just double the splendid sum which he had ventured to expect.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE NEW SQUIRE.

"Fair Damascus, on the fertile banks  
Of Abana and Pharpar, lucid streams."

LIONEL REDFERN, inheritor of Broadoak Avon, was a man so singularly like his deceased cousin Rupert, that in their youth they were scarcely to be known apart. Their fathers had married two sisters—co-heiresses—so that they were first cousins on both sides—and persons thus related are often more like one another than brothers are. In the old days, when they were at Oxford together, some curious things had happened in consequence of this close resemblance: more than once it had puzzled the proctors: the two Antipholi of Ephesus and Syracuse were not more provokingly alike than Redfern of Christchurch and Redfern of Maudlin.

Lionel Redfern saw no reason for hurrying homeward when the news reached him that his cousin and his cousin's wife were dead. It was a shock to him, but he had lived so long amid the silence and repose of the East, that he had become almost a fatalist. His habits were Asiatic. He had acquired a perfect knowledge of the chief Eastern languages, and very few of the natives recognized him as a European. The unchangeable tranquillity of the Orient was very dear to him, and he dreaded the return to Europe—to the vivid noisy life of England. So he sent home certain necessary instructions to solicitors and agents, and staid quietly where he was.

This was at Damascus, narrow-streeted city of rose-gardens and fountains and bazars, which has probably changed less since the days of the great Sheikh Abraham, than London has changed since the days of George III. In the city of the five rivers Lionel Redfern had a pleasant dwelling—its exterior a dull wall of bricks dried in the sun, but within a marvellous labyrinth of marble courts, and arabesque chambers, and cool fountains endlessly springing in the midst of innumerable roses. In those mysterious houses of Damascus there is a perpetual fragrance of the rarest roses; a perpetual murmur of water in motion, a perpetual cooing of doves which inhabit the cornices of the marble hypæthral courts.

Personally much alike, Rupert and Lionel Redfern had always differed widely in their ideal of happiness. Rupert was a man of action, liked hunting and shooting, liked the

management of a great estate; liked to improve his house, to alter his grounds, to cut avenues through his woods, to try every new experiment in horticulture and agriculture. When at Oxford he drove tandem, boated, played cricket, gave wine parties, and yet took a fair degree. Lionel, on the other hand, dreamed away his time in the pleasant quadrangles of Maudlin, read old-fashioned, forgotten literature, and took no degree at all. He was a born lotos-eater. When he went to the East it seemed to him that he had found his home, and he settled down to the enjoyment of absolute uneventful tranquillity as if to the manner born. It was a real trouble to him when he found himself clamorously summoned to take possession of a great estate in England.

Damascus is a city about the size of Bristol, but with more business. Those rivers which Naaman, the Syrian general, thought preferable for ablution to the stream recommended by the prophet, are not quite so lucid as Milton conceived them. They turn fulling-mills, they feed tanyards, they receive the drainage of many manufactories. The quays of Abana and Pharpar are noisy and fetid; the narrow streets of Damascus are crowded and unpleasant. But the houses, which resolutely turn a gloomy windowless exterior to those narrow streets, are so built that the noise outside can not reach their inhabitants, and that there is a delicious sense of perfect isolation. Lionel Redfern led the laziest possible life in this city of contrast. He never left his house. He smoked, and read, and drank from the wine-flask cooled in the fountain's basin, and slept on rugs on a terrace of marble, and enjoyed to the utmost the luxury of repose. His life was like a page from the Arabian Nights.

It was not destined to continue. There came, in reply to the instructions which he sent home, an abundance of documentary matter—and among it a letter addressed to him by his cousin. He broke the seals, and read:

"MY DEAR LIONEL,—Long before this reaches you I shall either have solved the great secret, or become a nonentity. And yet I don't know. Perhaps there is a *tertium quid*. Perhaps we are destined to be baffled and perplexed in another world, as we have been in this. I am unable to ascertain whence I came into this world, and may be equally ignorant when—or if—I find myself in some other.

"You remember the old days at Oxford, when we talked metaphysics, as young fools will. Strolling in the moonlight in Maudlin walks, to cool ourselves after a trifle too much heavy port and acid claret, we used to argue over and over again one special question—Is happiness to be found in action or in repose? And, as Anthropomorphism is inseparable from humanity, each of us had of necessity an exactly opposite idea of the Divine Being. You imagined Him a calm centre of the universe, watching with indolent amusement the mighty

panorama of affairs, and never deigning to interfere. I conceived Him as an ever-active and pervasive force, working directly in the very smallest events of the universe.

"We outgrow metaphysics: we never outgrow the peculiarities of character on which our puerile philosophy is based. At maturity a man sees that his notion of the Divinity is just a magnified form of what he finds best and strongest in himself. But that *self* never alters; I am just as restless as I was at Christchurch, when every hour of the day brought some new activity. You, I feel certain, live a life as placid and calm as you did in the quiet cloisters of Maudlin in drowsy summer days, when the deer in your college chase were too indolent to move.

"You will be my heir: I wonder how you will like it. The management of the Broadoak estate has taxed my energy to the utmost; you, I predict, will leave it to manage itself. I have made no will: Eva has an ample provision under her settlement; if you think any gifts should be made to old servants, I leave you to do it. Enough for a man to manage his affairs in this world, without troubling himself as to what may happen when he has passed to the other side of the mysterious chasm which nobody seems likely to recross—"

At this point Lionel Redfern laid aside the letter, and called for a fresh chibouque. And then, before resuming his cousin's communication, he meditated:

"What was the matter with Rupert, I wonder? This grumbling style is very unlike him. What can have occurred to change him?"

He resumed his reading. As his eye passed along the first few lines of the following page, he became more deeply excited. He read on to the end with so much rapidity that his chibouque was suffered to go out. When he had read to the very last line, he exclaimed:

"Poor Rupert! poor old boy! What an extraordinary tragedy! Well, I've got the best of the argument at last. Repose is better than action. At any rate, it is better to be a bachelor than to marry."

He remained awhile in a deep study. Then he said to himself:

"I must go to England, clearly. A nuisance, but there's no alternative. I wonder whether I shall ever again get back to delicious Damascus. Perhaps I shall prefer Thames and Avon to Abana and Pharpar. Who knows? Poor old Rupert's letter makes me doubtful of myself."

Your indolent men are always the most prompt and resolute in an emergency. Lionel Redfern determined to return to England at once. He started within twenty-four hours. And when he reached this western island, and put up at our favorite hotel, the Colossus, he felt uncommonly like a fish out of water. So, I suppose, would any one similarly situate. You have been accustomed to live in cool mar-

ble courts, amidst a murmur of fountains and an odor of roses; you find yourself in a huge and hideous coffee-room, haunted by innumerable flies, and smelling horribly of mock-turtle soup. You have slept on a terrace with no canopy save the sky; you are consigned to a wretched little box of a bedroom, cloudy with the soot of London, and probably infested by the *cimex*. You have had as attendants pretty little Syrian girls, with dark eyes hidden by long eyelashes; instead of these you have limp male creatures in dress-coats, with neckties which once were white.

Lionel Redfern did not at all like it; he got out of London as soon as he could. There was a preliminary visit to be paid to the family lawyers in Lincoln's Inn; and uncommonly civil was the senior partner of the firm to the new owner of Broadoak Avon, and a very nice little sum of money did he obtain by the mere passage of that estate from one owner to another. I wonder whether England will ever be so far civilized as to do altogether without lawyers! They cause more harm than any race of men—save one only.

When the new Squire reached Broadoak, the retainers on that establishment were completely astounded—they quite thought it was the old Squire back again. Only one difference existed—a long brown beard, which could have been grown in Asia only. You can't grow a respectable beard, or take a respectable photograph, in this commonplace Europe.

At Riverdale, which he visited several times, Squire Redfern seemed too like his predecessor. Archdeacon Coningsby met him in the Rope Walk, and suddenly started back, as if it were the ghost of his old friend. Then the truth suddenly flashed on him, and an impromptu introduction occurred.

"The proctors didn't know Rupert from me in the old days at Oxford," said Lionel Redfern.

"It is a wonderful likeness," returned the Archdeacon. "Will you stay and dine with me? My sister will be delighted to see you."

"What time do you dine?" asked the Squire.

"Seven, sharp."

"I'll come, with pleasure. But in the mean time I want to wander about this strange town of Riverdale, and compare it with the town in which I have been living lately."

"What town was that?"

"Damascus."

"Ah," said the Archdeacon, "I suspect you will find the difference very considerable. Will you tell us what you think of it at dinner?"

"Most willingly," replied Redfern.

He wandered about Riverdale for some hours. Unconsciously he caused a sensation in the town. Rupert Redfern was well known there, and his singular likeness to his cousin perplexed all who noticed him. But he, being as usual in a dreamy mood, did not observe the interest which he excited.

Boss's splendid exhibition of jewelry caught

his eye, and he entered the shop—having a superb diamond on his finger, in a rough ring of gold, which he wanted properly set. Boss, who was behind the counter, was terribly taken aback: the strange similarity was too much for him. However, he recovered himself, and took Squire Redfern's order, and gloated horribly over the diamond when he had it alone. It was just the perfect gem which would make a Hebrew jeweller forswear his religion to possess it.

Lionel Redfern, after much wandering about the main streets of Riverdale, began to get thirsty. So he turned into a court-yard—all the Riverdale hotels are in court-yards entered beneath archways—and walked up to the hospitable portal of the *Maypole* hotel. Who does not know that hostelry—where Byron drank claret, and Jack Musters whisky-punch? The new Squire walked affably into the bar. Hardy, the landlord, was there, talking to Chief Constable Severne. You would have thought those two individuals were going to faint when Lionel Redfern lazily lounged into the room, and sank into an old-fashioned leathern chair, and said,

"Landlord, bring me a bottle of your best Champagne—and some ice, if you have any."

While drinking a tumbler of Champagne, he entered into conversation with Severne.

"A curious town this," he remarked.

"Yes," said the Chief Constable. "I have good reason for agreeing with you. Cardinal Wiseman said it was the wickedest town in England: Lord Brougham said it was the most picturesque."

"Which was right?"

"Both, I think—but certainly the Cardinal."

"You said you had good reason for considering the town a curious place. May I ask what it is?"

"Certainly. I am the Chief of Police here—I fancy I ought to know it. I am on intimate terms with every thief in the place—and they are numerous."

"Charming! And yet I dare say thieves are very pleasant fellows when you know them. By-the-way, you had a *cause célèbre* here in which I am interested: a Frenchwoman was tried for the murder of my cousin, Rupert Redfern, of Broadoak Avon."

"Your cousin, sir?" said Severne. "You are wonderfully like him. Yes, I remember the trial well. Squire Redfern's wife was accused also, but she died before the Assizes. They had no case against the Frenchwoman."

"Do you think she did it?" asked Lionel Redfern.

"No I do not. There was no motive. I am afraid it was Lady Eva."

"You are wrong. Lady Eva was incapable of such a crime."

"Then you think it was the Frenchwoman—Madame—I forget her name."

"No I don't. I think that you clever gentlemen of the police have not yet obtained a clue to the real murderer. I have lived a good

deal abroad in my time, and I don't consider the English police absolutely perfect."

"They are very far from it," said Severne, "and for obvious reasons. We want a department of high police—I don't mean of political espionage, but of intellectual dealing with criminal enigmas."

"Do you think that practicable? Do you think, I mean, that educated men would care to devote themselves to such an occupation?"

"I don't see why not," replied Severne. "A judge does not feel humiliated because he has to try criminal cases. It is at least as honorable to prevent or to detect as to punish."

"Yes, you are right enough in theory. But the English are a prejudiced people, and will insist on ranking one policeman with another. Sir Richard Mayne, they tell me, used to affect as much state as a field-marshal—but the blue uniform never commanded the same respect as the red. Killing honest men is evidently a nobler vocation than arresting dishonest ones."

At seven, sharp, Lionel Redfern reached Archdeacon Coningsby's pleasant residence, close to St. Chad's. I have always wondered how it is that turf grows greener, that scarlet geraniums are scarleter, that peaches and nectarines ripen more deliciously for dignitaries of the Church than for any body else. It struck me in my boyhood, when I was terribly in love with the daughter of a Dean, and wrote after this fashion:

Autumnal sunshine seems to fall  
With riper beauty, mellower, brighter,  
On every favored garden wall  
Whose owner wears the mystic mitre:  
And apricots and peaches grow,  
With hues no cloudy weather weakens,  
To ripeness laymen never know,  
For deans and canons and archdeacons.

Dean Willmott's was a pleasant place,  
Close under the cathedral shadows;  
Old elm-trees lent it antique grace;  
A river wandered through the meadows.  
Well-ordered vines and fruit-trees filled  
The terrace walks; no branch had gone astray  
Since monks, in horticulture skilled,  
Had planned those gardens for their monastery.

Calm, silent, sunny: whispereth  
No tone about that sleepy Deanery,  
Save when the mighty organ's breath  
Came hush'd through endless aisles of greenery.  
No eastern breezes swung in air  
The great elm-boughs, or crisped the ivy:  
The powers of nature seemed aware  
Dean Willmott's motto was *Dormivi*.

Dean Willmott's mental life was spent  
In Arabic and architecture:  
On both of these most eloquent—  
It was a treat to hear him lecture.  
His dinners were exceeding fine,  
His quiet jests extremely witty:  
He kept the very best port wine  
In that superb cathedral city.

But oh, the daughter of the Dean!  
The Laureate's self could not describe her:  
So sweet a creature ne'er was seen  
Beside Eurotas, Xanthus, Tiber.  
So light a foot, a lip so red,  
A waist so delicately slender—

Not Cypria, fresh from Ocean's bed,  
Was half so white and soft and tender.

Helghol the daughter of the Dean!  
Beneath those elm-trees apostolic,  
While autumn sunlight danced between,  
We two had many a merry frolic.  
Sweet Sybil Willmott! long ago  
To your young heart was Love a visitor:  
And often have I wished to know  
How you could marry a solicitor.

I introduce this lyric of my youth—written, as you may perceive, gentle reader, in days when I believed in Winthrop Mackworth Praed—in order to sustain my theory that Churchmen high in the hierarchy are peculiarly blessed by the goddess Flora. Their turf is emerald; their flowers form perfect zones of color; their wall-fruit are fragrant orbs of sunlight. As to their daughters, fairest fruit of all—well, you see what I thought of Sybil Willmott—now Mrs. Parker Rooke. The lectures on Arabic and on the early English style of architecture to which I listened after dinner—over diaconal port far too good to be wasted on a young cub like myself—ought to have considerably enlightened me. They did not. I was thinking all the while of Sybil, who was in the drawing-room thinking (as I hoped) of me. When coffee was ready, and we made our way to that enchanted saloon, I was in a state of ecstasy. I was maddened by the pretty child's fair hair, and her elegant thin bust, and her dainty taper fingers. Well, she is now Mrs. Parker Rooke, and is the stoutest little woman in the precincts of St. John's Wood. Rooke, I believe, calls it Regent's Park.

Though Riverdale, having its huge manufactories of sham lace and cheap hose, is a smoky sort of town, Archdeacon Coningsby's gardens are as perfect in color and verdure as if they were on some island of magic, where the sun shines and the rain rains just as the gardener desires. The perfection of the place delighted Lionel Redfern, though he was fresh from Damascus. As he walked up between the brilliant parterres, he met the Archdeacon, who was waiting for him.

"What a delicious place you have here, in the very heart of a town!" said Redfern.

"It is pleasant," replied the Archdeacon. "I am not sure that the atmosphere of a town, unless extremely fuliginous, does harm to flowers and trees. At any rate, I have been very fortunate."

There was nobody at dinner but Miss Coningsby—notwithstanding which, I suppose it is hardly necessary to say that it was a remarkably well-appointed meal. And the wine which accompanied it was orthodox—and the conversation was manly and sensible.

"You intend to reside at Broadoak, I hope, Mr. Redfern?" said the Archdeacon, when his sister was gone, and they had settled down to their port in good English fashion.

What other nation can produce such a noble capacity for the absorption of that generous fluid? The Pope is a great name: but dare

he sit down to drink glass for glass of old sound port with a Fellow of All Souls? I doubt it.

"I am not at all certain as to what I shall do. You see, I am rather spoiled for a country life in England. I have been living lazily in the East. I should hate being a justice of the peace, and having to punish poachers. I think I shall return to Asia."

"Better not," said the Archdeacon. "An Englishman ought to live in England—ought certainly to die in England."

"Well, I have no immediate intention of dying. But let us change the subject. You knew Valentine Vivian, don't you?"

"Yes," said the Archdeacon, "I know him. Why?"

"I want to see him. Where is he to be found?"

"He is with his father in Westmorland. When Lady Eva Redfern died, the shock had such an effect upon him, that he fell into a state of stupor—they called it catalepsy. I believe he has never emerged from it."

"Strange," said Redfern. "I have never met him, but I thought from what I have heard that he was made of tougher materials."

"There's a good deal that is strange about young Vivian," said the Archdeacon. "But he comes of an eccentric race; his father was madder in his youth than the son has been."

"They are together in Westmorland?"

"Yes. Sir Alured took his son away to a place he has there called Hawksmere. I have heard nothing about them since."

Next day Lionel Redfern started for Westmorland. He had heard while at Broadoak Avon that Farmer Ashow was also in that country; and the old farmer was one of the few men whom he recollected as an acquaintance of his youth, when he sometimes spent the vacations with his cousin at Broadoak. He resolved, therefore, to visit Skelthwaite as well as Hawksmere: and he found it convenient to go first to John Grainger's newly inherited farm.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### SUPPER, AND AFTER SUPPER.

"Tant qu'on se pourra,  
Larrette,  
On se trinquera,  
Larira!"

FOLLOWING the fortunes of Valentine Vivian and Colonel Trafford—of the lovely Greek girl and the vivacious American actress—we have been neglecting Miss Blogg. But people of the Blogg type will not be neglected. They fill a larger space in the world than their superiors. They are the majority. They are what Mr. Gladstone calls *Tis*. The male and female Bloggs govern this realm: for them is produced the "Daily Telegraph;" they disestablish churches and pass bankruptcy acts.

Madame de Longueville had intended at

first to take Miss Blogg with her to Westmorland; but she thought that young person would be rather a bore, and decided to allow her to spend her holidays where she pleased. Miss Blogg had a brother—a young attorney, recently married, and living somewhere on the Metropolitan Railway: he invited her to his unpretending establishment, and she gratefully accepted the invitation. His wife was what the Yankees call a “caution.” She was a little bony coquettish woman, a year or two older than her husband, with a remarkable capacity for flirtation. I wish I had the power to depict poor young Blogg’s household when his sister became an inmate thereof. Miss Blogg saw that Mrs. Blogg was a regular flirt, and considered it her duty to look after her. Then came contention. Miss Blogg’s temper was sulky: Mrs. Blogg’s was fiery: so that the encounters between them were not devoid of interest to the psychologist. As a rule the sulky quarreller got the best of it. And indeed I fully agree with Charles Lamb and Thackeray, that to thoroughly enjoy life one ought to have a sulky temper. Would that I possessed that inestimable endowment! It is my great misfortune that I have a passionate forgiving temper. Anger with me is like the brief bright blaze of magnesium wire.

Blogg, the young attorney, dabbled in literature. He wrote the sort of sesquipedalian stuff which is largely manufactured now by the aid of Webster’s and Worcester’s dictionaries. His style was a little tarnished by the concoction of legal documents, but it was tolerably grammatical. Well, young Blogg had recently become acquainted with that Bohemian prince, that monarch of light literature, that lover of pale libations, Tom Harington; and Tom had just started his eight-and-thirtieth journal, the “Whisper;” and young Blogg found himself in probable receipt of a small fortune as a contributor to this periodical. Hence did it happen that, in the plenitude of his delight, he invited Tom Harington to dine at his dingy suburban residence, and gave him some stale fish and some fresh mutton, and some warm wine that was worthy of the dining-rooms in the Strand. Tom Harington enjoyed it greatly. With all his apparent *bonhomie*, he is rather a cynic. He delights in young Blogg, who sets up for a swell, and has discovered a crest and a motto to suit him, and talks of going to the Bar. He is charmed with Mrs. Blogg, an ugly little woman, who thinks she has married beneath her, and considers her husband neither stylish nor handsome, and is of opinion that she might have done much better. And he is curiously attracted by Miss Blogg, who has never been known to speak well of any body, and who is the most pious young woman and the most accomplished hypocrite in England.

Tom is an excellent old boy, but on this occasion he fell among thieves. He has a natural aptitude for so doing, and always quarrels with the friend who tries to extricate him. Had he been that “certain man” who went

down from Jerusalem into Jericho (and Tom has been going to Jericho all his life) he would infallibly have made a personal attack on the good Samaritan. The Bloggs flattered Tom to the top of his bent. Mrs. Blogg made dreadful love to him. What with her wicked eyes and her superfluity of false hair, she managed to make Tom Harington forget that her shoulders were bony, that her general contour was angular. Ye gods, what opera-boxes he bestowed on her! What nice little suppers (as yet unpaid for) he gave her and her husband and her sister-in-law at the Pall Mall, at Francatelli’s, at Kühn’s! Verily I envy Tom Harington his marvellous imaginative power, whereby he transformed Mrs. Blogg into the most beautiful woman in the world, and Miss Blogg into the most amiable of convenient companions—while Blogg was a very nice fellow, in whose constitution there was no spice of jealousy. Blogg made no end of money every week out of the “Whisper” at this period: all he sent in was printed, and he sent in a great deal of sad stuff which drove the sub-editor frantic.

One evening the Bloggs and Tom Harington were at a certain theatre together. Tom, you know, is always the editor of something or other, and, indeed, to see his splendid style, you’d think he was the editor of the “Times” at least—so he can always get a box. The worst of it is that these cheap admissions to the theatre entail subsequent expense. There’s no man so generous as Tom Harington, and there are few men so impecunious: but these little suppers run away with a lot of money, and they have to be paid for eventually. Well, on this particular evening the play was horribly dull, so Tom Harington left the Bloggs in their box, and went off to drink some iced liquid. As he crossed the street, a row was going on: a big fellow was pitching into another much less than himself, and the outside public of cabmen and cads were enjoying the contest.

Tom Harington likes to be in a row, and likes to take the weakest side. He forced his huge shoulders through the crowd, and promptly upset the big bully, who was previously master of the situation. The other, a foreigner, thanked him profusely.

“Oh, it’s all right,” said Tom, curtly, striding across to the well-known tavern where he had resolved to quench his thirst.

But the Frenchman followed him to the bar, and was voluble in his thanks, and entreated him to have supper with him.

“I have some ladies with me,” said Tom Harington.

“So much the better,” replied the Frenchman. “Shall we sup here? It is a good place.”

“I have no objection.”

“Very well. Waiter! a private room, and have supper ready as soon as the play is over. A good supper, mind.”

An excellent good supper the Blogg family got on this occasion, and very fair wines there-



with. Blogg himself had no palate for wine, and was almost a teetotaler; no generous fluid would raise him above the muddy level of his life. But he had a splendid appetite, and belonged to that class of men that can generally eat a duck after dinner. His sister was like unto him; much could she devour, but a very small quantity of alcohol destroyed her equilibrium. Quite otherwise was Mrs. Blogg; that young lady picked daintily at her supper, but she drank her wine freely, and seemed none the worse for it.

"Waiter, bring some liqueurs," said Tom Harington, when supper was over. "Marschino, curaçoa, trappisti, chartreuse. Look alive!"

The waiter looked alive, and brought them. They finished young Blogg, the attorney; he lay back in his chair, with his short shapeless legs on another chair, and snored most virtuously. Thereupon Tom Harington commenced a quiet flirtation with Mrs. Blogg, who seemed rather to like it than otherwise. Thereupon also the Frenchman began a flirtation with Miss Blogg, who, though unaccustomed to such encounters, bore her part singularly well. When do they not fulfill their duty, these excellent creatures of the other sex? If men were only as punctual as women in such fulfillment, what a happy world it would be!

Blogg was snoring. A glass or two of unwonted Champagne sufficed to send him into the land of dreams—if lawyers ever dream. What do they dream of, I wonder? Serving writs successfully, I suspect—for that seems the only romantic part of a lawyer's life. Tom Harington was getting on very rapidly with Mrs. Blogg, who thought the Bohemian editor far preferable to her little attorney. The Frenchman became very courteous to poor Miss Blogg—who, being somewhat plain and commonplace, was unused to admiration. But this rascally imaginative foreigner said things about her eyes and her hair and her complexion which inebriated her. She was quite delighted. You may have a great poetic faculty, my reader, but you can't imagine the ecstasy of an elderly girl when she fancies a young fellow is in love with her.

"I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you before," says the Frenchman, by-and-by. "I can hardly recollect where, but I can not be wrong. Once seen, you could not be forgotten."

"I have been living at Sydenham lately," replies Miss Blogg.

"To be sure. I remember now. I have seen you somewhere near the Crystal Palace. Are you going back into that neighborhood?"

"Oh, yes."

"It is very pleasant. It would be perfect, if there were only some water. I very frequently go down there. Shall I have the pleasure of meeting you sometimes? May I call?"

"I am afraid not," said Miss Blogg. "I hold a situation in a ladies' seminary there,

and you know how strict it is necessary to be at such establishments."

The Frenchman continued this conversation, and heard from Miss Blogg who her employer was, and what she thought of her, and that there was a mysterious young lady at the school who required to be carefully looked after, and much more of the same nature. He was greatly amused with his garrulous companion, though she had very little to tell him which he did not know before. For he was no other than Madame de Longueville's *bête noire*, the astute Vionnet; and, when he found himself in Miss Blogg's charming society, he thought that some day or other he might perhaps make her useful as a spy on Madame.

So he was courteous to her beyond measure: and I fear that Miss Blogg's withered heart was really a little touched, and that she lay awake that night in her stuffy chamber, thinking of the polite Frenchman. She certainly was very sorry when the party broke up—which was not till the waiter had given them several broad hints about its being time to close. Tom Harington was flirting and drinking iced Champagne, and would willingly have gone on with those two amusements till daybreak.

However, this was not to be, and at last the sleepy waiter was ordered to bring the bill. M. Vionnet paid it like a prince, taking a charming crisp bank-note from a plump roll, which made his two male companions quite envious. Ladies, as we know, don't care about money.

It was a fine moonlight, so that even the dreary vicinage of Covent Garden looked pleasant. A cab waited at the door for the Blogg family: when it drove off, Harington and his new acquaintance stood in the silent street, as though uncertain what to do next.

"I hate going to bed on a night like this," said Harington. "It's a most uncivilized thing, shutting up all the places at one o'clock."

"Yes," said Vionnet, "and yet you English are always boasting of your freedom."

"Well, are we not free?" asked Harington.

"Politically, yes. You can talk as much nonsense at public meetings as you please. What good is that? Only fools go to public meetings or read newspaper articles. You are free, but the price you pay for it is bad government. You can attack your real king—your Gladstone—and turn him out, and get somebody as bad or worse. We can not turn out our Emperor—but why should we, since he governs well? Here in London you are all afraid of your police; you 'move on' when they tell you; you go to prison if they accuse you of being intoxicated. Do you call that freedom?"

"That will be altered soon," said Tom, who had no affection for the police.

"Will it? Well, it is almost time. Do you know what they would do in an American city if they were bullied by their police? They

would form a committee of citizens, and go to the head constable's house, and hang him in front of his own windows."

"Rather a strong measure," said Harington, amused at his companion's volubility.

"Come," said Vionnet, "we waste time standing here; let us end our talk in a more comfortable place. I am not an Englishman, and therefore don't obey the one o'clock act. Here are some good cigars: light up, and let us move westward."

Harington obeyed, rather curious to see whither the Frenchman meant to take him. They crossed Covent Garden, where already the market-carts were assembling. Vionnet began again:

"You English free! It is the most wonderful piece of self-deception. You daren't open a theatre on Sunday. If you don't go to some church or chapel, you will be cut by all your friends. You daren't dress as you like or live as you like. You must be respectable. If two Englishmen quarrel, they can't settle it like gentlemen. If a man insults you or your wife, and you kill him, you will be treated like a mere vulgar assassin. The only freedom an Englishman possesses is, that he may talk or write any amount of nonsense about politics. In every thing else he is a slave."

"But you must confess that we have improved of late years," said Harington.

"Very slightly. In some things you have gone back. Why is London to put out all its lights and go to bed at one o'clock? Why are men treated like children? Hotels and taverns ought never to be closed; their doors should always be thrown wide; their rooms always brilliantly lighted when light is necessary. Your absurd law would rob me of half my life if I did not evade it. I never sleep more than four hours of the twenty-four. You islanders pass eight, ten, even twelve hours in bed: no wonder you are dull and sluggish."

Tom Harington, as every body knows, has a fine flow of language, but this voluble Frenchman beat him out and out. He was positively obliged to listen. As to arguing with him, he prudently refrained therefrom, since any attempt produced fresh cataracts of words.

"Hang it!" thought Tom to himself, "I don't wonder the other fellow pitched into him, if he talked to him as he does to me. He'd never stop unless he was knocked down."

They reached in due course a large house at the corner of a square. No policeman was to be seen in the neighborhood. Vionnet went up a few steps to the front door, which he scratched with his nail. It was instantly opened, and they entered. Through the hall they passed into a long room, which occupied the back of the house. It was fitted up as a restaurant, with marble tables and enormous mirrors. There was a considerable company of both sexes: some were enjoying delicate little suppers, while others were playing at piquet, écarté, chess, and the inevitable dominoes.

The long windows were thrown open to the ground, and a cool breeze came in from a garden beyond, where you could see foliage moving beneath the moonlight.

Tom Harington, a Londoner of the Londoners, could not conceal his surprise at the existence of this place. Vionnet saw it, and was amused.

"What shall we have?" he asked. "You see that the French citizens of your London do not obey your magistrates and police. It is a sultry night: shall we try some champagne-cup?"

"It will suit me very well," replied Harington. "This is pleasant, certainly. How is it the police don't trouble you?"

"Ah, that's the mystery. Perhaps the landlord bribes them: few people in this country will refuse gold. Adolphe, I want to make a champagne-cup: you know what I like."

A bottle of Roederer was brought, a bottle of seltzer, a flask of curaçoa, a pine-apple, a cucumber, a lemon, a few fine strawberries, a sprig of mint, another of blue-flowered borage, and abundance of ice: with these materials M. Vionnet deftly concocted a delicious mixture, very easy to drink on a summer night. He passed the two-handled tankard to Harington, who took a mighty draught, and was refreshed. Vionnet followed his example.

"Now," he said, "is not this better than going to bed? There are billiards and roulette up stairs, if you'd like to play."

"Not to-night," said Harington. "I feel quite satisfied with affairs as they are. You are quite an artist in champagne-cup. And really this place would be charming if it were not for the perpetual clatter of the dominoes."

"Ah, there you have me. I wish my dear countrymen could be cured of dominoes. But if the Emperor were to try to put down the game, it would cost him his throne. You may do what you like with a Frenchman—clap him in the Mazas, send him to Cayenne, make him miserable in every conceivable way—but if you leave him his dominoes he will not murmur."

"You don't care about the game yourself?"

"I did once. I should yield to the fascination again if I were to play."

"Well," said Harington, "that any body can play dominoes is a mystery to me. I once tried, to oblige a French acquaintance, but I couldn't do it."

They finished one great goblet of "cup," and Vionnet manufactured another, that was even better than its predecessor. Then their conversation turned upon journals and journalism in the two countries.

"You are a journalist, I know," said the Frenchman. "May I ask, without impertinence, what journal is yours?"

Harington told him, eulogizing the "Whisper" as the most promising periodical of the day. All it wanted to make it a magnificent property was an additional capitalist, as the

present man was getting a little tired of signing checks.

"These fellows," he said, "expect a thing to pay the moment it is started. They ought to be proud to invest their spare money for the benefit of literature."

"Of course they ought," replied Vionnet. "Of course it's what you'd do yourself, if you were a capitalist, Mr. Harington."

"Would I? I'll be hanged if I'd ever write another line, or if ever a periodical of any kind should enter my house. No: I'd buy a yacht, and go to the South Sea Islands, out of the reach of print."

"You'd find English missionaries there, distributing religious tracts. You English have the saddest and gloomiest religion in the world, and you do your best to make other people as sad and gloomy as yourselves."

"Aye, we are stupid enough in that respect. We think what is good for us must be good for other people."

"To return to your journal," said Vionnet, after a pause. "I can't find you a capitalist—and I suppose you know best where that sort of game is hunted down. But if you wouldn't mind taking a certain line of policy, I think I could secure you a subsidy. You might use it yourself, or hand it to your proprietor, as you thought best," he continued, laughing.

"What line of policy do you want taken?" asked Harington. "That sort of thing seldom answers, you know."

"I don't believe in it at all myself: it is seldom advantageous to either party. But I happen to hear of such things now and then. At this moment there is a great personage on the other side of the Channel who wants certain matters explained to the English public. I think he is mistaken, but that's his affair. He wants a series of articles printed, and will give ten pounds an article. Is it worth your while to take them? They will of course be so written as to suit the style of your journal."

Ten pounds a week struck Tom Harington as being a sensible and satisfactory sum. He did not refuse. He drank a long draught of champagne-cup to the health of the "great personage." He thought that he had made rather a good night's work by interfering to save M. Vionnet from a thrashing.

There was a faint gleam of dawn in the east by the time the two acquaintances had finished their colloquy. The garden below looked inviting: there was green lawn surrounding parterres of geranium, verbenas, heliotrope, petunia; some great plane-trees, giants, with patches of white rind upon their trunks, defying the smoke of London, waved abundant foliage in the air of summer. These, the favorite trees of Helen of Troy, are naturalized in the squares and gardens of Troynovant.

Hyperion's daughter, Lady of the Light, was about to emerge from her palace when Harington and Vionnet strolled through the open window into the garden.

"This is the proper way to see a sunrise," said the Frenchman.

"I have seen one or two on the mornings of great battles," remarked Harington. "You appreciate a sunrise when you're not very likely to see a sunset."

"It is a kind of appreciation I should hardly care about. By-the-way, it is getting on towards my bed-time: if I stay up too late I get chilled. You had better sleep here: I can find you a room: then we can talk over business at breakfast."

"All right," said Harington. "I am rather fond of sleeping wherever I happen to find myself."

He found himself, on the present occasion, in a comfortable chamber, furnished not at all in the French fashion, but with a bedstead of ample width and length, and abundant material for tubbing, including a shower-bath.

"This is very jolly," he said to his entertainer. "With a clear conscience one might manage to sleep pretty well here."

"We'll breakfast about twelve," said Vionnet, "if that will suit you."

Tom Harington, pretty well tired, was soon between the sheets, dreaming of Vionnet's promised subsidy, and of the irresistible fascinations of divine Mrs. Blogg.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### KETTLEDRUM AT BLOGG'S.

"Tea veniente die, tea decedente bibamus."

It must not be imagined that the astute M. Vionnet had forgotten Madame de Longueville—or that he was not somewhat surprised at receiving from her no copies of correspondence between Cecile and her lover. He could not quite understand the suspension of this correspondence. When he thought about it, he merely thought that there was perhaps a lover's quarrel, or that Colonel Trafford had gone abroad, or something of the sort. That Madame could connive at meetings between Colonel Trafford and Mademoiselle de Castelnau did not for a moment occur to him, chiefly because he felt that she was in the power of those who employed him, and that she dared not deviate from the orders given her. So, as there was other business in town which required his attention, he grew absorbed in that business, and gave Madame de Longueville a holiday.

It will be seen from this fact that spies are like other men in one regard—they don't understand women. If you want to calculate what a woman will do in any emergency, think of every thing she possibly can do, and the thing you don't think of is what she will do. This is as certain as any thing in Euclid.

Vionnet, as we have seen, had instructions to waste a little money—a mere bagatelle, considering whence it came—on securing the advocacy by English journals of a certain scheme.

He had lived long enough in England to know the futility of this process, and to be aware that though Englishmen are said to be ruled by their newspapers, they are not by any means. Englishmen, he was well assured, are governed by their breeches pockets. However, it was his simple duty to obey orders: and his chance meeting with Tom Harington gave him an opportunity of beginning to carry out his instructions. He rather liked the idea of showing himself grateful to Harington for saving him from what had seemed likely to be an uncommonly good thrashing. I'll say this for Tom: had he known what a scoundrel he was rescuing, or how thoroughly that scoundrel deserved the punishment from which he rescued him, he would not have moved a step to help him. For the man who was "pitching into" Vionnet was one Captain de Rohan, a famous Garibaldian, who had excellent reason for what he was doing.

Next morning, Harington awoke late, and could not at first remember where he was. This, by-the-way, was not an uncommon case with Tom—who had an easy erratic habit of settling down at night wherever there was a bed handy. He is without exception the most independent fellow in Europe: nothing disconcerts him: if you were to assure him that he would be hanged next morning, he would say, "All right: let's have supper." And after a joyous supper he would go quietly to bed, and be perfectly content to go into the other world after breakfast.

"This is not Sarum Street," he said to himself, when he awoke next morning. He turned himself lazily round, and looked towards the light. "I behold trees growing outside the window, and I should greatly like to see a tree grow in Sarum Street. Moreover, this is a spring mattress on which I repose, and it is my belief that Mrs. Codd's mattresses are stuffed with potatoes and hard-boiled eggs, with a few flints occasionally to vary the pressure. This is pleasant. I shall go to sleep again."

He turned round with that intent, but could not effect his purpose.

"Where the deuce am I?" he said, renewing his soliloquy. "I begin to have a vague reminiscence of a fellow who played Mephistopheles to my Faust last night, and led this innocent child into much peril. I hope I've woken up in the right world. People who have cloven feet ought not to be allowed to wear boots. Whatever world it is, I'm horribly thirsty. Is there a bell? There is. I'll ring."

He rang, and within two minutes there was a modest tap at the door.

"Enter," he cried.

A little *soubrette* opened the door.

"Bring me some brandy-and-seltzer iced," he said, emphasizing the last word as if he were doubtful whether ice would live in the locality wherein he found himself.

But there was no mistake about it. The seltzer was cured of its desire for efferves-

cence by the cool atmosphere in which it had dwelt. Tom Harington drank his liquid, felt refreshed, and tumbled asleep again. It was a real tumble—like that of a pigeon in the summer air. So deep did he fall into the voluptuous abyss of sleep, that Vionnet could hardly wake him when he entered his room an hour or two later.

"Are you ready for breakfast?" asked the Frenchman, when with much trouble he had induced Harington to open his eyes.

"What the devil's the matter?" asked Tom, still half asleep.

"*Parbleu!*" said Vionnet, "you English are incorrigible. Why, you have been drinking brandy already."

"Of course I have," replied Tom.

"Brandy in the morning!" shrieked Vionnet (it was then two o'clock); "why, it would kill any body but an Englishman. You should have had some Beaune and iced water."

"All right," said Tom Harington, who was beginning to wake. "It won't kill me. I'll have the Beaune at once, if you like to fetch a bottle. You needn't bring any iced water."

"*Cochon d'Anglais,*" said Vionnet to himself. But he rang for the Beaune, and had the satisfaction of seeing Tom Harington drink it from a tumbler in less time than it takes me to state the fact. If any reader doubts this, let him be made aware that Tom Harington is a very fast drinker, and that I am a very slow writer.

"Now I'll dress," said Tom. "What time is it?"

"About half-past two," said Vionnet, consulting a superb gold watch, which looked like sixty guineas' worth, and made Tom wonder what Attenborough would lend upon it.

"By Jove! I wonder whether I've any thing to do to-day. What day of the week is it, old fellow?"

"Friday," answered Vionnet.

"Confound it! I ought to have been at the 'Whisper' office at ten. What the deuce am I to do?"

"Bathe and dress and breakfast," replied the Frenchman. "This is a world in which the best policy is to take things quietly. If you're away from the office, no doubt they'll manage without you. If they don't, you can blow them up when you get there. Come, say you'll dress, and I'll go and order breakfast."

"All serene," said Tom. "I'll be down in the twinkling of a bedpost."

Vionnet went off to order breakfast, and Tom Harington popped into his shower-bath, exclaiming, on his way,

"That fellow's a philosopher, I'll be hanged if he isn't. He takes things coolly—icily, you might say. I thought I was a tolerably cool hand, but this Frenchman beats me."

There followed a rush and roar of water, and Tom emerged from his shower-bath looking like a half-drowned lion.

When he made his way to the room in which

they had passed the previous evening, he found Vionnet alone smoking a cigarette.

"This place," said the Frenchman, "is very quiet in the morning, which is one reason why I like it. My friends and countrymen who sleep here go abroad to their engagements, and not till five or six o'clock do many of them return. I have much to think about—many plans to mature; and I often walk up and down that gravel, under the trees, smoking and thinking, for hours together. But you are ready for breakfast, Adolphe?"

Breakfast was ready. Every body knows the sort of thing. Not tea and toast, eggs and bread and butter. No: lamb cutlets *aux pointes d'asperges*, a *mayonnaise* of lobster, kidneys *aux fines herbes*, a delicious omelette, etc., etc., with two or three long-necked bottles of the wines of Bordeaux and the Rhine.

"Where are you going after breakfast?" asked Vionnet.

"I must go to my office in the Strand."

"Après?"

"I hardly know. I promised to call at my friend Blogg's, to see how the ladies are after their dissipation. Suppose you come with me. You seemed quite delighted with Miss Blogg," he said, laughing.

"Charming creature," replied Vionnet. "Study of character. Wonder if any body will ever marry her. I should like to see her husband at the end of the honeymoon."

"By Jove! so should I."

"You prefer her beautiful sister-in-law," said Vionnet. "Matter of taste. Dumpy and dowdy, or affected and angular. Can't say I'm intensely attracted by either of them."

"Well," said Tom Harington, "at any rate Blogg is a good fellow."

"Is he?"

"Yes, and a confoundedly clever fellow both in law and literature. I've an immense admiration for Blogg. He's a young fellow of unquestionable genius. He'll die Lord Chancellor, if he lives long enough. Yes, I like Blogg."

"I should think more of him if he could stand a glass or two of wine."

"Ah," said Tom Harington, "he is very temperate. I wish I could be. His moderation is one of the things for which I admire him."

"And you are a countryman of Shakespeare's!" exclaimed Vionnet. "Do you know why men like this poor Blogg are temperate? Because they dare not be otherwise. Because they have no brain, no backbone, like *nos autres*. Because they are inferior animals. Pshaw, my dear friend, you are a man who ought to know better. These feeble creatures of the Blogg order have their use in creation, no doubt, but they don't develop into Lord Chancellors. Do you think Lord Westbury is a teetotaller?"

"Not likely," said Tom Harington, "I admit. But I must go to my office. Will you come—and then make a call with me on the Blogg family?"

"I shall be delighted. Adolphe, call a hansom."

The hansom arrived, and took them rapidly to the street of journalism, the Strand.

Tom Harington's paper seemed to have been getting on extremely well without its editor, and he was not long detained at the establishment. While he transacted his mystical business, Vionnet smoked a cigarette, and amused himself by wondering why newspaper offices are for the most part dirty sordid dens, in which you can not spend five minutes without longing for a bath and a change of linen.

"You may educate authors as much as you will, But the fragrance of Grub Street remains with them still."

Another odd fact is, that though an immense amount of writing is necessarily done in these places, nobody can ever find a good pen there, or a civilized sheet of paper. Byron hath it that

"Good workmen never quarrel with their tools,"

so I suppose that when the writing-fit is on him, a great journalist can write *with* any thing on any thing. Alexander Dumas is said always to use as writing-implement an ordinary wooden skewer cut to a point, and he has got through as much successful work as most people.

Tom Harington having finished his business, they strolled out into the Strand. I always think that street the second in London in point of interest, Piccadilly being of course the first by a long distance. It is an unfragrant street; Rimmel's perfumery and Burgess's pickles infect its atmosphere, and there is always a strong odor of cooking. These are drawbacks: but the philosophic nose must sometimes suffer, when the philosophic mind is exploring the busy haunts of men.

The best street in this metropolis ought to be the street of the future—the true Thames Street, which we now call the Embankment. I don't know what the wisacres who govern us intend to do with that street: if, however, they do the right thing, and give us a wide carriage-way, and a row of first-class shops, hotels, theatres beyond, Thames Street will be the noblest highway in the world. When such a street exists from London Bridge to Chelsea Bridge, on both sides of the river, foreigners will be forced to acknowledge that London is the finest city in the world. But alas! we are at the mercy of men like King Thwaites, and Bazalgette, his Prime Minister.

"Where shall we go?" asked Harington.

"You talked of calling on the ladies who are graced with the musical name of Blogg."

"It is rather early yet. Suppose we try a steamer, and see if there is any air on the river."

"I have no objection."

They went down to London Bridge, amidst the usual motley crowd one sees on the deck of a river steamer—a crowd so motley, that one

speculates as to what different parts of the universe they would be found in, if the engine-boiler were to burst, and blow them to atoms. Then Harington thought some brandy and iced water at the "Shades" would do him good, but could not induce his friend to join him. Vionnet liked to keep his brain cool, and knew better than to scorch it with alcohol.

After much further dallying of one kind and another—for Tom could never make up his mind to go straight anywhere—they found themselves in a carriage on the Metropolitan Railway, making their way through that noisy cacophonous tunnel to the modest mansion of the Bloggs.

"I've got a box at the Mastodon Theatre for them to-night, if they like to go. There's a new play by Cassius Balderdash, which will make a terrific sensation."

"Those young ladies seem fond of going to theatres with you," said Vionnet. "Does Blogg like it?"

"Don't know. He likes the supper after it. He does what his wife tells him."

"Admirable husband!"

The Bloggs lived in one of those dreary suburban streets in which every house is exactly like its neighbor—streets of such intolerable monotony that their existence suffices to account for the fact that Hanwell and Colney Hatch are always full of patients. Rather than inhabit one of those dingy houses, I would dwell in a mud hovel on any breezy common in the loneliest parts of England—rather indeed would I be a gypsy, and bivouac in leafy lanes, and eat roast hedgehog and grilled squirrel (both nicer than any thing you'll get in the way of an *entrée* at the Windham) and never enter a ceiled house again.

The two ladies were sitting in state in the drawing-room: there are no *parlors* in these days—they went out when comfort gave way to show, and conversation to gossip. It struck the ever-observant eye of Vionnet that Mrs. and Miss Blogg had been quarrelling, but if so, they were all sweetness and smiles when the gentlemen entered. And they both eagerly accepted the proposal of going to the Mastodon Theatre that evening.

"It is a grand play," said Harington: "Balderdash has surprised himself. It's called *Belladonna*, or, *Blown up in a Balloon*. *Belladonna* is the heroine, you know. She's the Principal of a Ladies' College, but devotes her holidays to pursuits of a less reputable but more lucrative kind."

At this point Miss Blogg blushed.

"There are some splendid scenes in it. There's the Ladies' College with about a hundred pupils—that ends the first act, with a charming ballet. Then there's the Rotten Row with real horses; and the Prince—I mustn't say what Prince—taking off his hat to *Belladonna*. But the great scene is where the villain of the play tries to murder the hero in a balloon; but the hero jumps out, and falls about a

thousand feet without hurting himself, and the balloon bursts with the villain in it."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Blogg, mincingly.

"I wonder how they manage to do it?"

"There is nothing," remarked Vionnet, gravely, "in which you English have so much improved as in your drama. Shakspeare, if he could reappear, would be amazed at such a magnificent play as this by Mr. Balderdash."

Vionnet was right, I think.

The visitors were regaled with biscuits and sherry, excellent Marsala from the grocer's, at one guinea per dozen. By-the-way, that was a good saying of my friend Mr. Hannay's on the war between grocers and publicans—when, the former having become venders of wine, the latter took to selling tea.

"The grocers fired grâpe," he said; "and the others returned it with canister?"

The grocer's acid sherry was not the sole beverage; afternoon tea arrived, and was dispensed by Mrs. Blogg with that elegance and grace for which she is famous. It was weak and not good; as with wine, so with tea, reducing the duty has flooded the market with vile rubbish. Our Frenchman preferred it to the sherry.

While Tom Harington was flirting in a murmur with Mrs. Blogg, Vionnet engaged Miss Blogg in conversation.

"Oh!" she said, "we were talking yesterday about the seminary at which I held an appointment. Do you know I had a letter this morning from the mysterious pupil?"

"Really. What about?"

"About nothing, to tell you the truth. She fancied I was still at Sydenham, and asked me to send her by post the book she left behind—some volume of silly poetry."

"Is that all?"

"Oh no: she is much more civil to me in her letter than she used to be in conversation—I suppose because she wants me to do something for her. There's the letter," said Miss Blogg, taking it from her work-basket. "She writes from The Villa, Blackwater. She says they are enjoying themselves immensely; Madame de Longueville has quite forgotten that she is a schoolmistress; and a Miss Sheldon, who went with them, has taught them to swim and to row, and catches big trout for breakfast. She isn't in the slightest hurry to come back to Sydenham. Besides, she says, there's a gentleman there whom she happens to know, who has a sailing-yacht, which is so very nice. An old acquaintance, she says—Colonel Trafford."

There was a sudden crash, which caused Tom Harington to spring to his feet. The hitherto imperturbable Vionnet was holding in his hand a cup and saucer, the former full of diabolically hot tea. At the name of Colonel Trafford he dropped it, and the boiling liquid scalded his legs. He did not feel the scald: he was too horror-stricken at what he had just heard.

"What the deuce is the matter?" exclaimed Harington.

"A sudden convulsive movement," he replied, regaining his self-possession. "I am occasionally subject to them. I trust you will forgive me, Mrs. Blogg, for startling you and breaking your china."

Mrs. Blogg was of course forgiving. And now it occurred to Harington that he must go and dine, and dress for the theatre—so the gentlemen took their leave.

"Where shall we dine?" asked Tom.

"I can not join you to-day," answered Vionnet. "I must attend to some important business."

"But you'll come to my box, won't you? And then you must sup with me."

"I will try," said Vionnet.

"Mind you do," exclaimed Harington, as they each climbed into a hansom.

In the Blogg drawing-room all was not peace.

"Really, Arabella," said Miss Blogg, "you flirt a great deal too much with Mr. Harington. I am sure you are making George very unhappy."

"Does George tell you so?" asked the matron, tossing her head.

"You know he loves you a great deal too much to say a word on the subject. But I am his sister, and I can see how hurt he is."

"Upon my word, Sarah," replied Mrs. Blogg, "you take a great deal upon yourself. I am the mistress of this house, and if I consent to take you in during your holidays, I think you might behave properly to me. Mr. Harington is a gentleman of whose friendship George and I are proud: and when you talk to me as you did just now, it shows that you have wicked thoughts in your head—yes, *wicked thoughts*, Miss."

"Oh, very well," said Miss Blogg.

What further interchange of elegant phrases would have occurred between the two can never be known, for at this moment entered Blogg. The ladies were immediately on their good behavior. The attorney was grimy and hungry. Not till he had polished off a good deal of mutton and French beans, washed down by ale at a shilling a gallon, did his wife venture to tell him that there was a box at the Mastodon Theatre ready for their occupation.

"Oh, hang it!" he exclaimed, "I am tired of going to theatres."

"But this is such a charming play, dear," said the amiable Arabella, gracefully seating herself on her husband's knee, and pulling his incipient mustaches. "It is Mr. Balderdash's new drama, *Belladonna*, and the heroine is said to be taken from that beautiful creature in the photographs—I forget her name, but you know who I mean. You never will tell me who she is."

"Well," said George Blogg, "I suppose I must submit. I wanted to have written an article on *Dishonored Bills* for the *Bream's Buildings Gazette*. Mind, I won't go out again

this week, whatever boxes your friend Mr. Harington may get you."

And he made a vicious dig at the Dutch cheese as he finished his sentence.

"Very well," said Mrs. Blogg. "Sarah, shall we go and dress?"

The ladies went. Blogg, in their absence, drank more of the table ale than was at all good for him, and swore mentally at Tom Harington. He never went farther than an execrative soliloquy, and the next time he saw the man he execrated he was as affable to him as if he loved him. Thus indeed he was to Tom Harington (of whom he was horribly jealous) on the present occasion; and, later in the evening, as he drank Tom's iced Clicquot, and beheld him pleasantly flirting with Mrs. Blogg, he muttered between his teeth,

"Don't I wish I had a writ to serve on him!"

## CHAPTER XL.

### ON THE LAKE.

"Τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μὲν χρηστὰ, τοῦ δὲ δαίμονος βάρβαρα."

IF I could build real castles as readily as I build castles in the air, I would certainly build one by a lake. Those inland waters, in my judgment, possess a peculiar poetry of their own. I like a lake with islands on it. I like to have an island big enough to live upon comfortably. It is a world within a world, to live on an island in a lake amid this insular England, itself an atom on the enormous ocean.

When one comes to consider it, in the organization of the universe mere size is slightly considered. The toad or lizard of to-day is descended from an ancestor about the size of the Houses of Parliament—a huge eft, created just that we might not be without reptiles in case we wanted them. This England—I am with Dean Swift, and abjure "Great Britain"—is a mere morsel of an island, yet its speech and its power pervade the world. And when, somewhere about A.D. 2869, we have made satisfactory communication with the other planets in the solar system, it will be found that though this earth is among the smallest it is the chief orb of all.

The pleasant lake on whose green margin many of our characters are just now dwelling has been too long neglected. The Hawksmere group were very happy. Sir Alured Vivian had not only recovered his son—he had discovered him. He began to rejoice in being a father. Valentine's brilliant intellect and daring courage delighted him. The blood of the Vivians, he thought, showed no degeneracy. The son whom he had regarded as rather a bore was now the chief interest of his life. He was absolutely surprised to find himself caring for Valentine more than he had ever cared for any of the innumerable women whom he had madly loved, and afterwards madly hated.

Curiously, also, Sir Alured was well pleased

with Earine. He recognized the Greek girl's perfect simplicity—the simplicity of Homer's Nausikaa, of Shakspeare's Rosalind. Too rare, unhappily, are such women in the days of the crusade of Miss Becker and Miss Faithful. Why, oh why can not these strong-minded ladies be quietly settled in some island of their own, where they might emulate the ancient Amazons, leaving the nice little women who are content to be wives and mothers unvexed by the infinite follies of feminine ambition? Even without these petticoated revolutionists, the innumerable affectations of fashion suffice to destroy the simplicity of women. Look at that pretty infant in its mother's arms, not yet cured of its thirst for the alabaster fount. You can see 'tis a girl, by its pretty affectations. Just as a well-bred pointer puppy takes to his business with inherited skill, so the female baby in long clothes is a flirt by birth.

Valentine Vivian was very happy, and daily grew happier; for his brain became clearer and stronger, and he began to understand his position in the world. He also began to understand Sir Alured: he obtained much of the confidence of that isolated, disappointed man, who by a great trouble was brought out of his isolation, and caused to forget his disappointments. Yes, Valentine understood his father, a soul inscrutable to common men; he saw why Sir Alured stood haughtily aloof from the world's pursuits, noble or ignoble, and buried himself in his own thoughts. Many a pleasant hour had father and son together—and those hours were good for both.

They never spoke of Earine, yet she was always in their thoughts at these times. There was an unspoken reference to her in all their converse. I think Valentine felt towards her much as did Rhaicos to the Hamadryad. When she was absent, she seemed present. He had but to think of her—and lo, her beautiful spirit seemed to enter the room and pervade its atmosphere.

Need I say how charming, how unutterably delicious, how full of mysterious magic, were Vivian's long lonely hours with Earine on the waters of the lake? Need I?—you guess it, my dear young friend, male or female, as it may be. You either have had, or will have, the same ineffably exquisite adventure, the same divine delight in the sweet society of a young person of the opposite sex. Not on a lake, perhaps—sailing makes some people fancy themselves sea-sick—but in a lane, or in a parlor, or down in a diving-bell, or up in a balloon, not a whit does it matter: the symptoms are the same, whatever the accidental circumstances. As with Romeo and Juliet, so with that red-haired young baker and his Matilda Jane.

I am positively overdone with these lovers and their sweethearts. Down at the Ferry Inn dwells Fighting Charlie Trafford, and eats big breakfasts of trout and mutton-ham, washed down with claret, and then whistles his terrier, and has out his boat, and isn't seen again till

the gloaming is on the lake, and the elders of the village are drinking their whisky and water. What can he be doing through the long August days? All the gossips know; aye, and they all know which of the three ladies at the Villa magnetizes him. Not the middle-aged Frenchwoman, certainly—no, nor that pretty young creature that can row and swim better than any Westmorland girl—but the tall and stately beauty, with calm melancholy eyes, who walks like a princess, and whose rare smiles are full of a strange charm.

The unhappiest person in the neighborhood at this time was Madame de Longueville, who was in terror every moment of the day and night lest Vionnet should come upon her. She knew that this must happen in course of time: she had an awful dread of what must happen next. Yet somehow or other, by the exertion of immense self-command, she contrived to appear moderately happy. Her companions did not suspect that she was in this terrified state. Charlie and Cecile were, I fear, too engaged with each other to take much notice of any body else; while the little American actress enjoyed so thoroughly her dips in the lake, her rowing and sailing and fishing, that she had almost forgotten the existence of Sir Alured Vivian, just on the other side of Blackwater.

Sometimes, as Colonel Trafford's tiny yacht was flying along the lake, it came very close to that other sailed by the beautiful Greek islander, while Vivian gazed dreamily into her luminous eyes. Of course Colonel Trafford had heard at the Ferry Inn the romantic story of the sailor lad, and all else that the Hawksmere folk fancied they had discovered; of course, also, he repeated it to his friends, little deeming that Madame de Longueville had any personal interest in the affair. She however was any thing but pleased to find that the girl she had tortured at Rouen, and who had recognized her at Broadoak Avon, was now so near to her. She was not at all satisfied with the situation. At any moment the inexorable Vionnet might appear: at any moment she might be brought face to face with Earine. But Teresa had the indomitable Corsican spirit; she was resolved not to be beaten, whatever happened; only just at present she did not like to make any definite movement until danger arose, on the one side or the other. What to do she could scarcely determine until she saw from what quarter her first peril came. The imminence of peril she perceived clearly; the calmness with which she awaited it was worthy of a better cause.

The party at Hawksmere had recently been increased by the arrival of M. Catelan, who had a week or two of holiday from conspiracy, and thought he would visit his old friend, and judge for himself concerning Dr. Chicard's cure. Sir Alured was naturally delighted to see his friend: Valentine and Earine selfishly monopolized each other, and the old baronet sometimes found it rather dull. Catelan's arrival was in every way fortunate. On the day of its occurrence they



all dined together—for Valentine had become quite civilized. After dinner, Sir Alured and his guest walked out upon the terrace, within sound of the great waterfall.

"What do you think of him, Catelan?" asked Sir Alured.

"I think it's a wonderful cure," said his friend. "Chicard has worked a miracle. The boy is sane—as sane, at least, as a Vivian can be."

"Thank you. But will he keep sane? Is there any way by which I may insure his not having more madness than a Vivian naturally should have?"

"Make him marry that charming Greek girl as soon as possible. She will take good care of him, depend on it."

"You think it would be safe?"

"Unquestionably. And when it is done, I hope you will settle quietly down in England and look after your estate. You must have been enormously robbed by stewards and agents all these years that you have been living abroad."

"I can afford it," said Sir Alured.

"Philistine! Of course you can afford the waste of money; but can you afford to turn men into thieves by trusting them without a check? People call me very bad names: I am a socialist, a Red Republican: I wish to revolutionize society. Not so: I merely want to see men do their duty. That is all the revolution I want. There is a king, let us say, a popular, generous monarch, lavish with his money on women and horses and hounds. He does no good; he does no particular harm except by an occasional breach of the seventh commandment; there will be great lamentation at his death, and a grand epitaph on his mausoleum. Well, do you call this man a king? The king, according to etymology, is the man who *kens*, and the man who *can*: there are both knowledge and power in that monosyllable. Does the libidinous losel whom I have imagined deserve to hold the name and office which are next to God's? I think not."

"My dear Catelan, I entirely agree with you. But why waste this eloquent enthusiasm on me?"

"Why? Because the argument applies to you. You are the king—of these great estates of yours. There is no such absolute king as an English country gentleman. It is in his power to change the aspect of the world for the people who live on his land. Do you know how many people live on your land?"

"No, indeed," said Sir Alured, much amused by his friend's fluency.

"Of course not. Far more likely would you be to know the head of deer in one of your parks. Of course you don't know whether they have wages enough to live upon—whether their children get any education—whether their cottages are fit for human beings—whether they can get pure water to drink. If you, the proprietor of these unlucky serfs, these helpless slaves of the soil, disregard these things, do you think your

steward, who has got a carriage and pair and plenty of port wine out of you and them, is likely to care about them?"

"I dare say they are as well off as others of their class," said Sir Alured.

"I dare say," replied Catelan. "That's the easy English spirit. Am I my brother's keeper? Has it ever occurred to you, Vivian, why God gave you an immense estate?"

"I have not too curiously considered the question."

"Well, I'll tell you. The estate was given you that you might make it sustain in happy circumstances the men living upon it—and as many more as possible. You are King of Hawksmere—and of half a dozen other places, I believe—and I suppose there are not twenty of the innumerable people connected with you who have ever seen you."

"You are an enthusiast, Catelan," replied Sir Alured. "Moreover, sir, you are a sophist, and you know it. There is the preliminary difficulty that men are scarcely ever placed in the right position. I am an owner of property: I am quite unfit for the duties of that position—indeed I have not yet discovered what I am fit for. God makes a man a poet: luck makes him a policeman. Luck, you see, is the god of this world. There is, very likely, some position for which I am eminently fitted, but I have not yet found it out, and should probably be unable to attain it if I had. Your own is a case in point. You are meant to rule a nation: you are an exile and a conspirator."

"You are beyond argument," said Catelan; "perhaps you are not entirely beyond advice. Look at that boy of yours. He will want a career; he has immense power, but it has hitherto run to waste; and the lady who I presume is to be his wife has qualities which no Englishwoman has possessed since the days of the Plantagenets. Might it not be worth while to induce him to do what you never will do yourself—to take some interest in the people over whom he will be king when you have passed into another world? Unless you can give him an object in life, he will either relapse into his former state, or will become a mere lotus-eater. Now, there are duties he ought to do: and you know this as well as I—however you may choose to sophisticate. If you want to make your son happy, marry him as soon as possible to that little girl, and start him on a tour of inquiry into the management of your property."

"I'll think about it," said Sir Alured.

"I'll leave you to think about it," replied Catelan. "I am going to take a stroll."

He descended towards the lake, while the old baronet thought over his rather abrupt advice, and decided that it would be wise to follow it, if Valentine were inclined thereunto. And then it occurred to him that, by means of Earine, Valentine might be easily persuaded.

Catelan, who had not yet explored the neighborhood to any extent, made his way down to the shore of the lake, and stood in front of the

Ferry Inn. It was just after sunset. The scene was picturesque. The elders of the village were smoking and drinking outside the hostelry; the boys and girls of the village were larking and giggling on the edge of the water. A tall gentleman (our friend the Colonel) was walking up and down with a cigar between his lips. The ferry-boat was coming across, with a heavy freight: and there was always excitement in Hawsmere village when the ferry-boat came in laden with passengers. The new-comers this evening were an Oxford reading-party, with a gay *insouciant* semi-poetic semi-cynical, credulous incredulous dipsychian Fellow of Oriel at their head. They sprang merrily ashore, about a dozen of them. They must all have suppers and beds; they were as hungry as hunters; they were as thirsty as travellers across the Sahara. They were as merry as if life had no troubles and no problems. To see them was to be refreshed, by reason of their beautiful boyish vigor.

So thought Catelan. Babies of Oxford, he called them in his own mind—but baby-giants. Such young demigods, he thought, keep England going. Italy has Apollo, and Germany Athena, and France Hermes—England has Herakles. He will undertake any number of labors, this blind obstinate strength, twelve or twelve hundred; he will blunder on to victory somehow; he will never know when he is beaten, and he will never make any use of his success. That's England (thought Catelan), and those are some of the young sons of Alcmena. They will beat the world at politics, love, cricket, rowing, fighting;—but there isn't an idea among them.

While thus soliloquized M. Catelan, Colonel Trafford had followed the party into the Ferry Inn where they were bewildering Mr. and Mrs. White by their multiplied demands. Indeed, the excellent landlord and landlady had a problem of some difficulty to solve. There was but one room at the inn besides that which Colonel Trafford occupied, and there were a dozen young gentlemen to be lodged. But worthy Mrs. White did not despair. Their neighbors were won't to help them in these sudden invasions, so Mr. White started forth to billet his guests in the various cottages of the Hawsmere hamlet.

Colonel Trafford followed the party to the inn from an indistinct notion that he recognized their leader in the dim light of the autumnal evening. Nor was he wrong. The broad-shouldered big-headed fellow, nearly as tall as himself, was an old schoolfellow at Rugby, some years his junior.

"Why, Powys!" he exclaimed, "how are you? I'm delighted to see you. You remember Trafford?"

"Of course I do," said the Fellow of Oriel; "but how do you come to remember me?"

"Why, weren't you my fag, you villain—and the most incorrigibly indolent fag that was ever walloped with a stump? We ought to remember one another. Are you likely to be long in this neighborhood?"

"We are trying to find a big house in a lone-

ly corner of the hills where we can establish ourselves. You don't know such a place?"

"No, indeed. I'm a stranger in these parts, as the man said when somebody asked him if that was the moon."

"Well, we must explore. This is my first reading-party, and I'm rather shy about it. I don't want the men to fall in love, or to waste their time in any way."

"You think it a waste of time to fall in love, do you?" said Trafford. "I like you young fellows, just fresh from a public school, with a firm belief that an accurate knowledge of certain Greek and Latin authors *plus* Paley and Butler, *plus* some bewildering mathematics, is a fulfillment of the whole duty of man. By Heaven, the first pretty girl you see, your system is upset, and you find that

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

"There is something wrong, I think, in English society," said Powys. "I'll tell you what I find, from my experience of Oxford. There are two questions that occupy young men—creed, and sex. Just at the time when their intellects are most active, they have to choose between the numerous theological theories which the Church of England presents to them: and at the very same moment they are chiefly impressed by female fascinations. One promising young fellow suddenly resolves to become a Unitarian minister; another offers his hand and heart to the barmaid of the Bell and Bottle. What's to be done with such fools?"

"Nothing, that I know of," said Trafford. "Fools will be fools, whatsoever happens, to the very end of the chapter. But men like you, Powys, are in a false position. You have not solved for yourselves the great problems of life, and yet you have to offer guidance to others. Do you like teaching?"

"I enjoy it above every thing. Only I find that, whenever I begin to deal with important questions, innumerable points arise of which I have never thought. I am asked what I can not answer, and the fellow who asks does not see as I see the enormous importance of his question. That's the worst of being a 'coach.'"

"Exactly," said Trafford. "You sons of learning split hairs, and make difficulties; and when you are commanded to do a thing, you question the authority of the Commander-in-Chief. He tells you clearly enough what to do by the appetites which he has given you: you denounce those appetites as sinful, and deliberately refuse to obey orders. Now I am a fighting man. I always obey orders. I have been in two or three uncommonly hot things, and I learnt then a good deal more than I learnt from Homer and the Plays and Plato. Old Homer is the healthiest teacher, I think, of all the bookmen. But when it's a case of life or death, and you plainly see you must kill three or four big fellows or else be killed yourself, I can tell you you learn more in five seconds than five

years will teach you. The first time I cut down a man—he was a famous Sepoy *sabreur*, and had sworn he would kill me—it gave me an enormous sense of power. I cut right through helmet and skull, and there was a hideous grin upon his fiendish face as it fell in two halves over his shoulders. Gods! how I rejoiced! I rode right into the *mêlée*—men said I had a charmed life. Heaven only knows how many I killed that day. Then I knew what Homer meant about his heroes being helped by the gods. There was a god by my right arm that day, and wherever I rode through the dusky ranks of the mutineers, they went down like wheat before the scythe, and I saw them lying in a long line—a hideous harvest of scoundrels.”

“Ha! ha!” quoth Powys. “There is a fine murderous tone in your description. You don’t do that sort of thing up here in the Lakes, I hope? You have, let me venture to insinuate, some milder motive in residing at this humble though cleanly inn.”

“By Jove!” said the Colonel with a laugh, “I should rather think so. I don’t want to cut down any more men. A day’s work in that way tires one’s right arm consumedly. No, Powys, my boy, I am down here to make love. Am I too old, think you—too withered and buffeted—to marry the sweetest creature in the world?”

Asking which question, he tossed the light crisp curls back from his forehead—a forehead that was broad, though not high—and awaited an answer.

“Old!” exclaimed the Fellow of Oriel, “you are the youngest of men, physically and psychically. Very glad am I to find you in the midst of a love-adventure.”

At this moment there arose a shout from the inn that supper was waiting. The under-graduates whom Powys had in command were awfully hungry. Mrs. White had spread for them an appetizing meal.

“Come and have some supper, Trafford,” said Powys. “You’ll find my boys very well behaved. You need not be always meandering about the margin of the lake and thinking of your lady-love. Will you come?”

“I shall have to punch your head, as I used to a dozen years ago, if you can’t be civil. Yes, I’ll come and sup with your youngsters—I like fellows of that age; but none of your chaff, or, by the fist of Hercules and the girdle of Venus, I’ll never introduce you to the future Mrs. Trafford.”

“Awful threat! Never mind, old boy, I’ll be on my best behavior. I can see you’re hard hit, and I’m very sorry for you.”

## CHAPTER XLI.

### LOST IN BLACKWATER.

“Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!”

THERE are people whom the world worships, because in some way or other they are too strong

for the world. They cut through it, like Fighting Charlie Trafford through the black mass of Sepoys. They care not who goes down before them, and so they are feared and respected. That first city-builder to whom Abraham Cowley refers was the prototype of this class: I suspect people shuddered when they saw him, and knew by the terrible deep furrows in his brow that he was the first murderer, the first fratricide—the first, in fact, to put into use that splendid new invention, death.

There are, on the other hand, people who are not feared or worshipped, by reason of their thorough kindness of heart. Except by the few who can appreciate their good qualities, they are usually rather despised. The beggar comes to their gate, and receives twice the dole he would get elsewhere, and goes away sneering at the “soft old bloke.” Their gay young friends borrow money of them on false pretenses, and spend it as royally as borrowed money is usually spent, and laugh merrily at the weakness of the lender. After all, however, is it preferable to be the generous soul who parts freely with his money to his friends and to the distressed, or the people who take that money and laugh and sneer at the giver? Had Le Fevre turned out an impostor, who would have dared to laugh at my uncle Toby?

Jack Eastlake belonged to this second class of men. All this time he has been ungratefully neglected, while Vivian had been growing better, while the fighting colonel has been love-making, while even Madame de Longueville has been enjoying life in her peculiar way. Jack begins to feel himself left “out in the cold.” Of course there are plenty of people to visit him at Birklands. People of two classes are indeed vastly interested in that pleasant country-seat. There are a good many ladies, some young and others middle-aged, who would not at all object to be Mrs. Eastlake of Birklands. And there are a good many young gentlemen who vote Clara Eastlake “a jolly little girl”—which she certainly is—and who are probably not oblivious of the fact that she is likely to have a jolly little income. So Jack and his daughter get plenty of company, and enjoy the best county society, and may both get married at an early date if they like. Moreover, there was the four-in-hand; Jack Eastlake could always change the scene when he felt disposed, in the pleasantest way possible.

Vivian, I regret to say, sunk in the double delight of renewed health and of happy love-making, would have given no thought to his friend, even had he remembered his existence. But it seemed to Earine that her friend and protector ought not to be neglected; and she also thought that if Vivian saw him, he might gradually be brought back to a more complete recollection of the past. She reasoned that, if he recognized his old friend, he would probably recall the events in which they had been actors together. So she talked over the matter with Sir Alured, and persuaded him to invite East-

lake and his daughter to Hawksmere. Catelan, who was consulted on the occasion, fully approved of the plan.

"The little lady is right," he said to Sir Alured. "Do all you can to revive his intellect. It is healthy now, and works easily; he thinks clearly and talks fluently—and I suspect he writes, for his lamp burns late. Give him every chance of completely recovering himself. A meeting with his old friend may have fortunate results."

Very delighted was Jack Eastlake when he received Sir Alured Vivian's courteous letter, describing his son's improvement in health, and pressing him to come and visit Hawksmere. He threw the letter over to his daughter.

"Shall we go, Clara?"

"I should like it very much. You have often said you would take me to the Lakes, papa. And I *should* like to see dear Earine again."

"Very well," said Jack; "we'll go—start the day after to-morrow. I suspect they're uncommonly queer roads for driving a team."

It was no joke for Eastlake to attempt so long a journey: to fulfill the conditions of his uncle's will (which he always did, religiously), he was compelled to send on his drag and about a dozen horses, with a sufficient strength of grooms, by rail. So accustomed, however, had he become to this, that he cared very little about the trouble. He reckoned on finding stabling of some sort, even in the wilds of Westmorland; so he gave his orders and made his arrangements, and in due time found himself at Windermere station—which his equipage had reached a few hours earlier. The lakemen were not a little astonished to see a well-appointed drag come down from the station, and grooms lead several pair of horses to Rigg's excellent hotel.

In order to reach Hawksmere it was necessary to cross the ferry; there is no other road. There is a bridle-road from Hawksmere over the falls, but nothing with wheels could traverse it. So Jack had to take his equipage across the lake: and the wide old boat, which had conveyed many a market-cart, did its duty excellently well. And the stables at Hawksmere were quite large enough to take in all his horses; but the drag had to be put under shelter at the Ferry Inn, since nothing but a steam-engine could have got it up that steep ascent.

Jack Eastlake and his daughter reached Hawksmere at about three on a delicious August afternoon. There was no one to receive them but Sir Alured Vivian, for Valentine and Earine were away on the lake, and M. Catelan had strolled out to think in solitude. The Frenchman always liked to think out his schemes alone, and beneath the azure canopy of sky. It need not be said that Sir Alured received his guest as Valentine's staunch friend deserved to be received. The old baronet was a good deal humanized of late, since he had discovered that it was worth while having a son.

Beautifully tranquil was the golden August

afternoon, when Jack Eastlake and his daughter Clara crossed the ferry. An hour later the scene was changed. Sudden storms are common among those hills, and the winds often descend upon the lakes in the most unexpected way. I myself, a quarter of a century ago, sailing on Wastwater on a calm summer day, had my boat upset by a sudden squall, and was obliged to swim ashore. An hour after Jack Eastlake's arrival he was standing at a window of the hall, with Sir Alured by his side, looking down upon Blackwater. A wind from the fells had suddenly descended on the lake, and was torturing its waves into wild and ghostly shapes. Black was the mist which simultaneously fell upon the mere. But through it all were discernible the white sails of two boats, one of which, as Sir Alured knew, was freighted with his son and Earine. So suddenly had the squall descended that it tore the canvas from the masts before its coming had been perceived.

Accident had driven the two yachts close to each other just before this sudden storm came roaring over the fells. One contained Valentine and Earine—no one else, be sure: but Colonel Trafford had with him the three ladies of The Villa, and his old friend Powys, Fellow of Oriel. Down came the mad wind through the Hawksmere gorge, smiting the lake with fury unutterable, taking both boats out of the hands of their astonished crew. Vivian and Earine were instantly in the water, and both were very comfortable there; but the sensible little Greek, thinking more of safety than decorum, threw herself on her back, and rapidly got rid of her petticoats and boots. She saw that help was wanted close by, and she swam to give it. So did Vivian, as soon as he could collect his ideas; but he had been smoking and dreaming, and was taken rather aback when he found himself in the water.

"These people want help," screamed Earine to him, and through the strife of wind and water he only just heard the scream.

Yes, they wanted help. It was Colonel Trafford's party. Fighting Charlie could swim tolerably: Powys was the "glory of headers" at Rugby, and couldn't be drowned in still water: the American actress was a first-class performer, though of course not equal to our Greek girl, who had lived in the sea: Madame de Longueville and Mademoiselle de Castelnau were just beginning to flounder, under Emily Sheldon's directions.

What happened? Of course Colonel Trafford made at once for his lady-love, and awkwardly attempted to help her. To him came Earine, who cried,

"Can you swim ashore yourself?"

"Yes," he said.

"Do it then, and leave her to me. She won't sink while I am with her. Get out a heavy boat."

Fighting Charlie found it no easy business to fight his way through this stormy water to the Hawksmere margin of the lake.

When he reached it, he was too exhausted for some minutes to utter a word. But at last he made them understand what he wanted; and then, strong as he was, and with the knowledge that the darling of his heart was still in the lake, he fell back fainting on the shingle. The aborigines administered whisky with praiseworthy promptitude.

Valentine Vivian, whose wild experience had made him quite at ease in the stormiest water, looked about for somebody to help but saw no one. Earine was easily upholding Cecile in the water, and making her way quickly shoreward; shoreward also Powys and the little American were pushing with tolerable success. He noticed nobody else. He did not see—and indeed no one saw—Madame de Longueville struggling with the avenging water, which drew her in and sucked her down in a few seconds—seconds that to her seemed years.

Aye, in that time Teresa the traitress lived over again all her miserable life, and especially its earlier years. Again she was a young girl in Corsica, island of beauty and terror, whereto might well be applied the lines

"Methinks the Fairies with their snakes,  
Or Venus with her zone might gird her:  
Of fiend and goddess she partakes,  
One half is love, the other murder."

Again she was tempted to shame and treason by the gay young French officer, who sang the songs of Béranger and De Musset, and thought all things fair in love and in war. Again she felt the hissing brand upon her dainty shoulder, and knew herself an outcast forever. And every minute moment of her happy girl-life—every little playful incident she had wholly forgotten—incidents of goat-milking, cheese-making, chestnut-gathering, came back upon her in that small fraction of a minute before the cruel water choked her. "Time," writes Hooker, "is the measure of the motion of the spheres." As well say that time is the particular record of your own watch or clock. The man who has not lived a century in a minute is wholly unworthy to read this narrative.

They got safely ashore, both boats' crews, with the exception of Madame de Longueville. Colonel Trafford was first to land, as we have seen. Very soon after came Earine and Cecile, convoyed by Vivian. Mademoiselle de Castelnau was only half alive, and had to be put at once between the blankets at the Ferry Inn. The next arrivals were Miss Sheldon and Powys—the little actress much in advance of the Fellow of Oriel, and in considerably better condition. It was she who first discovered that Madame de Longueville was nowhere to be found. 'Tis a case of *suave qui peut* when you find yourself in the middle of a stormy lake. Poor Emily had no opportunity of thinking about any body except herself until she got ashore.

A scene of intense excitement was the Ferry Inn at Hawksmere this afternoon. Never had an Oxford reading-party met with so striking an adventure. There were six people undergoing

hot blankets and brandy, while a seventh was unquestionably drowned. Such an incident would be something to talk about at wine-parties. Thus they pondered, these young Christians, while some fishermen manned a boat and started to search for Madame de Longueville's body.

For the squall was as brief as it was sudden and fierce. By the time Sir Alured Vivian and his guest reached the Ferry Inn, there was perfect calm, and broad sunshine lay on the still surface of the lake. From the inn door emerged Valentine, smoking a cigar. He had not heard of Madame de Longueville's being lost.

"No harm done!" he exclaimed cheerily. "I am going up to get dry clothes, and send some down to Earine and a couple of ladies who are half drowned. You'll have to make room for them, sir—and there will be a splendid opportunity for flirtation. By Jove, who is this? Why, Jack Eastlake! My dear old boy, how came you here? This is pleasant!"

He had instantly recognized his old friend.

"Well," said Sir Alured, "we may as well go back with you, and see what arrangement Mrs. Birkett can make for the ladies."

Sir Alured and Eastlake reascended the hill with Valentine, and orders were at once given to Mrs. Birkett to find some sort of dresses for the young ladies. With the least possible delay the worthy old dame toddled down the hill, followed by a couple of lads with bundles of clothing, chiefly her own. The result, if ludicrous, was picturesque. Mrs. Birkett was a dumpling of a woman—very short and very round. Her attire almost smothered little Emily Sheldon—but only imagine how the tall and elegant Cecile de Castelnau must have looked in it! However, there was no choice: and I regret to say that some of Powys's pupils had much difficulty in stifling a laugh when they saw that stately maiden ascending the hill towards Hawksmere in drapery much too wide for her, and also much too short.

Sir Alured Vivian's hospitality was accepted without reluctance. Miss Sheldon was so shocked by the fatal accident to her friend, that she scarcely thought of her curious position in regard to the old baronet. Nor was she destined to be reminded of it. Mrs. Birkett and Earine compelled the two young ladies to go to bed; they put them into an immense double-bedded room, which had been intended for stray male guests in days when the Vivians kept open house at Hawksmere. So big was the room, that Cecile and Emily had to talk at the top of their pretty voices to hold any conversation with each other. Having got them safely between the sheets, Mrs. Birkett and Earine went off to find them supplies.

"I hope Madame de Longueville is comfortable," said Cecile, who had not heard of the catastrophe.

Emily Sheldon was silent. She did not like to talk about it. She felt miserable because she had made no attempt to save Madame. She

had a hideous vision of her friend sinking in the stormy lake, and vainly calling for assistance. So she made no answer; and Cecile de Castelnau, fancying she was asleep, said nothing further, and was very soon asleep herself.

Meanwhile the news reached Hawksmere that one of the party was lost. Birkett, who, visiting the village daily, heard all the gossip of the place, was able to tell Sir Alured Vivian who the people in the boat were. The lady that was drowned kept a school somewhere near London; she had taken the villa down the lake; the two others, it was supposed, were her pupils. She was a French lady, and so was one of the others—the tall one; and Colonel Trafford, a gentleman staying at the Ferry Inn, was keeping company with the last young lady.

"I had better go down and see this Trafford," said Valentine Vivian. "It is as well not to trouble the young ladies until they have recovered themselves, but he may be able to give us some information."

The four gentlemen descended to the Ferry Inn, where they found Colonel Trafford and his friend Powys quite recovered, and looking out anxiously for the fishermen, who had begun to drag the lake. Sir Alured Vivian introduced himself.

"You knew this unfortunate lady, Colonel Trafford, I believe. Ought not her friends to be informed of what has occurred?"

"I knew her," he replied, "but not intimately. A young lady in whom I am deeply interested was a resident at a school which she kept; and when they came up here for the vacation I very naturally came likewise. I am quite sure that Mademoiselle de Castelnau has not the slightest knowledge of Madame de Longueville's friends. I may say frankly, speaking to gentlemen, that this young lady was placed with Madame de Longueville, that I might be prevented from seeing her. But, as the old song says, 'Love will find out the way,' and I contrived to conquer Madame's scruples, and to obtain access to the little prisoner."

"But the other young lady," said Sir Alured. "She may know more. Is she also a pupil?"

"Very likely she knows more. She is an actress—a Miss Sheldon; evidently an American."

Sir Alured Vivian started at the name; and M. Catelan looked at him with an amused smile.

"It seems to me," said Valentine, "that if the two girls are better they should be made come down to dinner. Then, if they have any information, it will be easily elicited. You will not object to come up, Colonel Trafford, I hope; we can offer you the highest possible inducement. And, Mr. Powys, will you join us? There are two or three ladies unattached to choose from, and there is a capital haunch of red-deer venison. Our time is eight, sharp. The beauty of living north is that you can dine later than in the south."

The invitation was accepted; and Valentine, on his return, told Earine that the two young ladies must come down to dinner. And thus were they arranged:

EARINE.		
TRAFFORD.		EASTLAKE.
CECILE.		VIVIAN.
CATELAN.		EMILY.
CLARA.		POWYS.
SIR ALURED.		

[I leave the central blank to be filled by any reader with Epicurean imagination. But by no means let him forget the haunch of red-deer venison.]

Cecile de Castelnau had been told of Madame de Longueville's death by this time. She and Miss Sheldon entered the drawing-room last of the party, and it would be hard to say which of the two showed most emotion—Emily, when she beheld Sir Alured, or Cecile, when she suddenly met the glance of M. Catelan. As for the old baronet, he took matters like a man of the world, and shook hands very cordially with the young lady to whom he was engaged. Between Cecile and Catelan there was no sign of recognition. But I think Achille Catelan was more perplexed by the situation than any other member of the company.

Vivian very soon ascertained that Miss Sheldon had no intimate knowledge of the lady who was lost. She was a mere casual acquaintance in the first instance, the little actress told him, and she had never told her any thing about her friends or relations. And as Emily, so soon as she had eaten a slice of venison and drunk a little wine, chirped away as merrily as a bird, it became clear to Valentine that the disappearance of the hapless French schoolmistress was not likely to cause great grief to her companions.

Dinner over, the four ladies retired, and Catelan and Trafford came together at the table.

"You propose to marry Mademoiselle de Castelnau?" said Catelan to the Colonel, in a low whisper.

"Certainly I do."

"You know her true name and rank?"

"Yes."

"How came she in company with this French schoolmistress and this American actress?"

"She was sent to live with the Frenchwoman, who was a spy upon her; and I suppose the American was an accidental acquaintance."

"Probably," said Catelan, who was thinking of that night by the Thames, when Sir Alured had asked the actress to marry him, and wondering whether the wicked face he had seen that night in the moonlight from the inn win-

dow was now deep in Blackwater. "May I ask what you intend to do, Colonel Trafford?" he said, as they were rising from the table. "Have you any definite plan?"

"A very definite one. I have had the banns published twice at the little church at the lower end of the lake. To-morrow will be the third time, and on Monday I intended to have taken her down there and gone through the marriage ceremony."

"Ah, then you are nearly out of danger. I know the secret history of the intrigues of which this young lady is surrounded; I know who her persecutors are, and what they hope to do with her and her immense fortune. Her you may win, if you are prompt enough: as to her fortune, that is another affair."

"I have plenty myself."

"Yes, but there is no reason why her property should be stolen from her. I am surprised to see her here. They must have had unlimited confidence in this person who is drowned. I don't wish to alarm you, but there is a whole day yet before you can act, and you know what your adversary is made of. What time is the marriage on Monday?"

"Eight o'clock."

"Ah, the earlier the better. I will be with you. In an emergency I might be of use."

"Many thanks," said Trafford, earnestly.

Catelan left him to join Sir Alured, who was thoughtfully looking out upon the moonlit lake, which lay like a sheet of silver far below the windows.

"This is a curious coincidence," he remarked.

"I am glad of it," said Sir Alured. "The little girl turns up here quite by chance, and I can manage to do something liberal without having to look for her and make a proposal. I think it is fortunate."

"Yes, you are quite right," said Catelan.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### IN PURSUIT.

*Florian.* "What! dead, my lord!"

*Count John.* "Ay, very dead—and very fortunate: For death has saved her from my deathless hate."

VIONNET had no heart for dinners or theatres after the news he heard from Miss Blogg.

"What an ass I have been!" he soliloquized, as his hansom travelled rapidly to the establishment at which he had entertained Tom Harington. "If I fail in this business I am ruined. What influence can this Trafford have obtained over that wretched Corsican? It is a mystery; she knows I can send her to prison with a word."

He unlocked an iron-bound chest, selected from it several documents, and took, moreover, some notes and gold. Then he rapidly packed a small bag, ran down stairs, swallowed a glass of absinthe, and ordered the cabman to drive to Euston.

There was no train for an hour, and M. Vionnet walked about in a terribly fretful state. But the longest hour of waiting comes to an end, and at last he found himself in the carriage of a fast train. It was a smoking-carriage; he made and consumed cigarettes with feverish haste all through the long hours of travel, and took no notice whatever of his companions. This was the first blunder of his career, and he felt that, unless he could retrieve it, his career was over. And it was a career he loved: to be a successful spy was the height of his ambition; he had a real disinterested delight in his rascally profession.

He could get that night no farther than Kendal. He went to a hotel of the old rusty commercial type; was supplied with some greasy mutton chops, which he could not have eaten with his healthiest appetite; and then tried to drown his cares with some brandy of unmistakably British manufacture. How heartily did he execrate English barbarism! The huge four-post bedstead on which he had to lie, with its beds odorous of rancid goose-feathers, did not improve his temper. He did not sleep; now and then he dozed, and woke in a fright, fancying himself in a solitary prison-cell; and he dressed himself at a ridiculously early hour in the morning, unrefreshed, but madly eager to continue his journey.

He had forgotten that this was Sunday morning. Few were the trains—and all of them slow and inconvenient. Whatever he might do, there was no chance of his reaching Blackwater till late in the afternoon. He muttered under his breath the elegant oaths which are dear to his nation, and pushed forward as fast as he could.

"That foreign gent must be going to be married," said the Kendal hostler to the pretty barmaid, "he's in such an awful hurry."

"He doesn't seem very happy about it," she answered.

"No, my dear," said Joe. "When you and I goes to be spliced, we shall look a little cheerfuller, I ventures to hope."

The young lady called him "himperent," and ran off to prepare herself for church.

Thoroughly fatigued was Vionnet when he reached The Villa at Blackwater that tranquil Sunday afternoon. He had made inquiries as he approached the place, and was informed that three ladies from London were living there. He exulted in coming suddenly upon his quarry. He rang the gate bell but received no reply. The fact was that the frightened servants, when they heard of the accident, had run home to their relations, who lived near at hand, leaving the house without guardianship.

"Every body is gone to church," thought Vionnet, after ringing two or three times. "That's the custom in this stupid country."

The door of the villa which looked towards the road was fastened, but Vionnet found a way round, and discovered that the French windows were wide open. He stood on the lawn for a few

minutes, looking at the lake, which slept calm in the sunshine, as if no wind had ever ruffled its surface.

"Parbleu!" he thought, "a nice place enough. But we shall soon take you away from it, *miladi*."

He entered the cottage. Books, and fragments of feminine trifling, were scattered about, and every thing appeared as if the ladies had just stepped out. Vionnet, confirmed in his idea that they were at church, resolved to await their return. And now he began to feel fatigue and hunger. He had been unable to eat any thing since he left London the previous afternoon. He began, therefore, to look about for something eatable, and was fortunate enough to discover an ample supply in the larder. He ate voraciously: he drank a bottle of Madame's special claret; and then he returned to the parlor, and smoked cigarettes, and read a few chapters of Gauthier's naughty novel.

But the ladies did not return, and he became conscious that the church service ought to be over. He went out into the road, and looked up and down, but not a creature was to be seen. The loneliness and silence were oppressive. He returned to the lawn, and saw that the lustre was dying from the lake, and that a dull mist was creeping up from the westward, blotting out the sunset.

"Perhaps they are on the lake, after all," he thought. "Yet no: they would not take the servants."

Harder villain than this Vionnet there was not in Europe; he had no pity, no fear, no remorse; but a shudder came over him as he stood on this solitary lawn, amid a silence that grew oppressive, with no human creature anywhere visible. Indeed, as he looked on all sides, the only living creature he saw was a hawk, poised high above the lake, watching for some luckless victim. Suddenly the fierce bird, seeing no chance of prey, swept swiftly out of sight—and Vionnet felt lonelier than ever.

What should he do? His impatience grew fiercer every moment. Perhaps already he was too late, and Colonel Trafford had married Cecile. If so, what a frightful revenge he would take upon Teresa Moretti! Wheresoever she might hide, he would assuredly find her and punish her perfidy.

Thus reflecting, Vionnet walked down the lawn towards the lake, but nowhere on its still surface could he perceive any sign of a boat. Suddenly his eye fell on something in the shallow water two yards from where he stood. It looked like a human body. Yes—it was some one drowned—a woman, he could see.

Who was it? That question must be answered. Was it Teresa? Was it Cecile? What might happen in the latter case? Not without a shudder did he walk down the soft white shingle, with the water rising above his ankles, to the place where the dead body lay, face upward, the garments moving slightly with the wash of the wave.

Yes: it was Teresa Moretti—and no other. The lake had brought her home.

What should he do? What if he were found alone with the corpse, and suspected of murder? He could not show any right to be on the premises. He left the body where it was, and hastened up the lawn, and got out of the house as quickly as he could. The place was still lonely; nor, as he walked rapidly along the road, in an opposite direction to that which he had come, did he see any one.

In twenty minutes, for he walked very rapidly, he came to the green tongue of land running into the lake opposite Hawksmere Ferry; here he paused, looking across to the little hamlet, and the great gorge amid wild fells where stands the old house of the Vivians, and pondering the question whether to cross the ferry or go forward. He could see the big boat just putting off with a freight of passengers; he decided to wait, till it reached the shore, and inquire whither the various roads would lead him. So he sat where once before sat our little sailor-lass—and looked gloomily over the water, wondering all the while what could have become of Cecile. Had there been murder committed? It seemed not unlikely, when three ladies were living unprotected in a place so solitary. He could not venture to ask any questions; he must remain in the neighborhood, and wait for any information which rumor might bring.

There was no inn on the road before him, he was told, for about ten miles. He was already very tired; besides, he was anxious not to go so far from The Villa. The Ferry Inn, he learnt, was very full—but there might be a bed in one of the cottages. If not, they'd be sure to manage something for him. With this assurance the travellers wished him good-night, and he stepped into the boat, and was punted over to Hawksmere village.

Mrs. White was of course quite ready to supply him with food; but a bed was a different matter. Not only were the resources of the little inn strained to the uttermost, but the cottages in the hamlet were also over-populated, and young Oxford men billeted everywhere.

At last it was arranged that Vionnet should have a mattress on the parlor floor, and herewith he was compelled to be content.

The Oxford men were lounging about the beach that evening. Their tutor was up at Hawksmere with Colonel Trafford, who was not at all likely to lose sight of his Cecile on that which he hoped would be the last day of her maidenhood. He knew the possibility of sudden interference at the very last moment; so he kept on guard as long as he could, and indeed did not leave Hawksmere till after midnight. And, when he left, he could not make up his mind to go to bed. He smoked a cigar beneath her bedroom window; then he went down to the lake and smoked another there; and so he passed the long still hours, watching the great procession of the stars, and thinking of Cecile.



But I am neglecting M. Vionnet, who managed to eat a little and to drink a great deal, and who then went out upon the beach. The young Oxford men were strolling about in groups, smoking short pipes, and for the most part talking mild heresy—an under-graduate's natural Sunday evening amusement. Presently a splash of oars was heard, and a heavy boat came gliding on the shingle.

"Well, Tom," shouted one of the Oxford men, "found the body?"

"No, sir," said a voice from the darkness, "not a sign of her. To-morrow's the third day—she's sure to come up by then."

"I beg your pardon," said Vionnet politely to the person nearest him, "has some one been drowned here?"

The man he addressed was one of the reading-party—a lazy lotus-eating fellow, who was looking forward with hearty contentment to being ploughed.

"Yes," he said. "A couple of boats were upset by a squall yesterday, and a French lady was lost. I forget her name. She was a school-mistress, I think they say, and had a couple of her pupils with her."

"They were saved, I suppose."

"Oh yes: they're up at the big house you see on the hill-side. An old baronet lives there—I forget his name—no end of a swell. I never can remember names."

There were indeed very few things Giffard could remember, except the places at which he had been lucky enough to find good bitter ale and cigars. On these and similar points he was so accurate as to have become quite an oracle: when complimented on this faculty, he would say,

"You see, my dear fellow, I do not fritter away my memory on the absurd stories of the heathen gods and goddesses, or any other rubbish of the kind. I devote myself entirely to useful knowledge."

Vionnet, glad to find that he was so near Mademoiselle de Castelnau, was yet considerably puzzled to know what to do next. He had no authority over the young lady: she had never seen him: there seemed no way in which he could interfere with her. His *bête noire*, Colonel Trafford, was probably close at hand. Him of course he knew by sight, as it had been his duty to watch him in London.

Although it was Sunday night, every body was up late at the Ferry Inn. The men who had been searching the lake wanted refreshment after their day's work; Powys's pupils were quite willing to join them, and even Powys himself, who had again been dining at Hawksmere, unreluctantly listened to their yarns as he drank his last tumbler of whisky. The window of the room in which they sat was wide open; Vionnet sat on a bench outside, and listened to their talk, and occasionally turned round to see the speaker. As it grew late, he heard a fresh voice, and saw Colonel Trafford enter.

"Ha, Powys," said the Colonel, "you are here first. There is no news, I find."

"None whatever."

"I shall go early on the lake myself to-morrow. Tom, can you have that light boat of yours ready at six? Four oars, you know."

"All right, sir."

The Frenchman thought he would go inside, in case the Colonel's talk should give him any information; he sat down opposite Cecile's lover, and called for some sherry and lemonade, and quietly smoked cigarettes.

It is a curious fact that there exists in the human race an instinct transcending reason. Animals, it is well known, instinctively recognize their enemies, even in earliest youth; men also have this instinct, though they seldom exercise it. The oft-quoted epigram on a certain Bishop of Oxford is to the point:

"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I can not tell;  
But only this I know full well,  
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."

Who has not, on very first meeting with a stranger, been impressed with an inexplicable dislike? As we pride ourselves on being reasonable creatures, we do our best to get rid of this feeling—we consider how absurd it is to be prejudiced against a man because his nose turns upward or his eyes have a cast in them. We recollect all the good things we have heard of him, and are quite angry with ourselves for such puerile fancies. Well, he becomes our friend: in time we forget that we ever disliked him, and begin to rather admire his nose and eyes. And then one day he plays us some scurvy trick—against which instinct warned us, only reason would not listen. Women have this instinct in a finer form than men; and, as they are not reasoning animals, they do not spoil it. They are intuitive judges of character. So, by-the-way, are dogs—especially thoroughbred ones.

Colonel Trafford, the moment he set eyes on Vionnet, disliked and suspected him. He was of necessity in a suspicious state; for it seemed unlikely that he would be permitted to win his prize without a struggle. Vionnet was perceptibly a Frenchman: and solitary Frenchmen are not often found rambling through picturesque parts of England. Fighting Charlie jumped at once to the conclusion that this fellow was a spy upon him: and, as we know, it was a correct conclusion. Was he alone? It seemed unlikely. Had he any power over Cecile, or was there any one with him who had? These and similar questions perplexed Colonel Trafford's brain, as he sat in that smoke-clouded room, contributing his nebulous quota, and longing for sunrise, and Cecile, and the boat on the lake, and the little gray church where the great deed was to be done.

It is not to be denied that Vionnet was also perplexed. He could not see what to do. He staid awhile in the parlour of the Ferry Inn;

then he went out to collect his thoughts in the open air. How to interpose between Made-moiselle de Castelnau and her lover—that was the crucial question. Madame de Longueville's death left him powerless. He walked up and down the margin of the lake, reflecting on his difficult position, and finding no way out of it.

Through the darkness, presently, he saw a tall form approaching him. At first he thought it was Colonel Trafford, whom he had noticed wandering about the place at irregular intervals. Not so, however; this tall fellow was enveloped in a cloak, and had a mysterious appearance, altogether different from Fighting Charlie's. When the cloaked figure approached him, it paused; then came a whispered word—his own name—

"Vionnet!"

He knew the voice. There flashed upon him the conviction—hitherto unknown to him—that he also, the spy on many spies, was watched by careful eyes. It humiliated him, this notion. He had foolishly fancied himself independent; now he found that he was under perpetual surveillance.

"You have managed this affair very badly," said the new-comer, speaking French. "If I had not received warning of what was going on, there would have been a complete failure. As it is, I am not certain that we shall conquer the difficulty. Do you know that Mademoiselle is to be married to-morrow morning?"

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Vionnet.

"Pious exclamations are of slight service," replied the other. "You ought to have prevented this. You trusted that Corsican woman, and she got drowned just when she was most wanted. Besides, she had betrayed you before. This English Colonel must have bribed her."

"What is to be done, Marshal?" said Vionnet.

"Aye, that's just the way. You get into an inextricable difficulty, and then you cry out for help. As I told you, they count on marrying to-morrow morning—at a little village church down the lake—Garthwaite it is called. Didn't you hear Colonel Trafford order a boat at six o'clock? You ought to have suspected something."

"I ought," said Vionnet. "I have been overdone these few days. What do you think of doing?"

"There is but one chance now, and it is a perilous one. I intend to interrupt the service—which is a usual thing here in England—and to say that the young lady is my ward (which is quite true), and that her marriage with Trafford is out of the question."

"I don't think you can stop it that way," said Vionnet.

"I mean to try," he answered. "You must come to bear witness that I am what I pretend to be. We had better start for Garthwaite at once, I think."

Vionnet slept on no mattress that night. He

obeyed orders at once: and the two Frenchmen reached Garthwaite just as the sun was rising.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### CATELAN'S "COUP."

"Pistols for two."

COLONEL TRAFFORD, who had ordered a boat for Garthwaite, altered his mind very early next morning. He did not go to bed; but when he saw a chance of sunrise—just a faint streak of saffron in the east—he took his matutine dip in the cold waters of the lake, and then went indoors and dressed like a bridegroom. Few are the men who wake throughout the night before marriage, and then plunge in mere or river or ocean just as the stars wax pale before the sunrise.

This, however, Trafford did: and as he descended from his small bed-chamber at the Ferry Inn, he encountered Jack Eastlake. Not often did our good-humored friend rise at an hour so desperately early; but on this occasion he was particularly anxious to be in good time.

"How do you go to Garthwaite this morning?" he asked of Colonel Trafford.

"I have ordered a boat."

"Much better let me drive you over. My horses are fretting for want of work, and the drag will hold all who like to go. Suppose there should be rough weather. You don't want to be upset again, do you?"

"Not at all. You are very kind, Mr. Eastlake, and I gratefully accept. It is just seven miles by land: half an hour's drive, I suppose."

"That's about it. Eight sharp is your time, my daughter tells me. I'll have every thing ready at seven."

Up at Hawksmere, early that morning, what a stir there was! What a sweet susurrus in the girls' bedrooms! What a pleasant excitement among the young fellows, Catelan and Sir Alured not excepted! A tremendous cold breakfast was ready in the hall at six—red-deer ham, boar's head, game pie, and other comestibles of a stimulating yet satisfying character. Therewith not merely coffee and tea—the cat-lap of the day—but also flagons of mulled burgundy, an excellent beverage for folk about to marry, or even to look on at that somewhat terrifying ceremony.

Cecile was not at all frightened. She had long ago made up her mind, and now it was quite clear that the right moment had arrived. Abrupt as was the arrangement, Earine managed to array her in something like bridal attire: and when she tripped down the wide old oaken staircase into the hall—where breakfast was laid, and a huge wood fire blazing upon the dogs—she looked extremely nice. Earine and Emily and Clara followed her—and 'twas really a bouquet of girls. The sun was hardly up: his earliest, faintest rays were struggling

with the light of wax candles on the long breakfast-table, and the fitful blaze of the wood fire.

They sat down pleasantly to refresh themselves. They all seemed to have good appetites, bride and bridegroom not excepted. There was some mystery and difficulty about the affair, you see; it was not a mere commonplace marriage, with papa and mamma consenting, and a choral service, and a breakfast from Gunther's; it was done in the morning twilight, in a quaint old church on the margin of a lonely lake. All this was unspeakably exciting and pleasant, and gave a curious relish to the viands which John Birket had placed on the breakfast-table.

I think it is exhilarating to drive four-in-hand to one's marriage. Jack Eastlake's favorite roans were in harness. Fighting Charlie drove: Cecile sat on the box by his side. Never was there such a drive as that morning along the margin of the lake, just crimsoned by the final flush of the sunrise, with a soft south wind meeting them, and kissing the sweet eyes and red lips of the bride and her bridesmaids. Jack Eastlake did his best to perform on the Colonel's bugle, but soon blew himself out of breath.

By-and-by they reached the little church, a gray lichen-stained square-towered edifice, standing quite alone upon the shore. They pulled up at the lich-gate. Within the sacred boundary they perceived the parson and his clerk; outside the low stone wall two other persons were visible. Achille Catelan's quick eye caught them instantaneously.

"I thought so," he said to himself, as the drag stopped. He sprang down on the near side, so they could not see him. "Hand me that case, Mr. Eastlake," he said.

Jack Eastlake, much wondering, handed down a neat case of Spanish walnut, with a silver plate whereon were engraved Catelan's name and crest.

"Vivian," said the Frenchman to Valentine, "keep close to me. I shall want you. Let every body else go into the church."

Into the church they went, in the highest spirits, Sir Alured leading Cecile, and the Colonel following with Earine, and Powys with Clara Eastlake (whom the Fellow of Oriel was beginning to regard as a singularly marriageable young lady), and Jack Eastlake with Emily Sheldon. Catelan and Valentine Vivian brought up the rear tardily. The two strangers who had been waiting outside came slowly after them.

As the church door closed behind Jack Eastlake, Achille Catelan turned quickly round and met these two persons. One of them was a tall man in a cloak, with a long gray moustache, which almost concealed his mouth. Catelan put out his nervous white hand and touched him on the shoulder.

"Marshal Dessaline!"

He started back in surprise. In surprise, also, Vivian looked on, and Vionnet. At last the tall man said,

"M. Catelan!"

"Ah, you know me. Well, now is the time. You are a coward and a liar and a traitor. I have told you so before. Here are pistols—here are seconds: let us settle this matter."

Catelan's intellectual countenance flashed into a strange indignant beauty as he uttered these words. His antagonist, at first completely paralyzed, began to collect himself.

"Afterwards, if you like," he said. "I am here to stop this marriage. It is a base trick—a lady of princely rank to be married to an adventurer. She is my ward."

And herewith he tried to advance towards the door of the church, where already the service was in progress. But Vivian, whose muscles of steel had recovered their elastic energy, gave him a slight touch that made him recoil, and said,

"Better wait."

And then Catelan replied,

"Your ward! You wretched slave and spy! You have no claim upon her, no connection with her. Now, have you any courage? Here are pistols; I condescend to offer you satisfaction, though I know you to be unworthy of it—No, I can see you dare not accept my offer. Go! Take your miserable associate with you. Never let me see your face again, unless you wish to be punished as you deserve. Go!"

Unreplying, the two men sneaked away, looking extremely crestfallen. Eastlake's grooms saluted them as they passed with some contemptuous chaff, which they probably did not appreciate.

"That's one way of facilitating a wedding," remarked Catelan with a smile, replacing his pistol-case on the drag. "I had a presentiment that fellow would be here."

"He was evidently surprised to see you."

"Yes; he had reasons for supposing me to be in Italy. It is sometimes necessary to resort to finesse when one is surrounded by *mouchards*. Come, let us enter the church; *La belle Cécile* must be Mrs. Trafford by this time."

Yes: at that very moment she was signing her maiden name for the last time: and, strange to say, it was not *De Castelneau*. Are you at all curious to know what it was, O reader? Search, then, the register of Garthwaite Church.

Very gayly did the wedding-party return to Hawksmere, with the silver bugle pealing a jubilant strain. Not till they re-assembled in the hall did Colonel Trafford and his wife hear aught of Catelan's achievement.

Then said Valentine,

"You were nearly interrupted, after all, Colonel Trafford."

And he gave a graphic relation of what he had seen.

"I am very grateful to you, M. Catelan," said Trafford. "But who were these people? There was a fellow down at the Ferry Inn last night who seemed very like a *mouchard*."

"That was one of them, no doubt," replied Catelan. "But the man to be feared was of a superior sort—a Marshal of France, I assure

you. You know his name, Madame," he said to Cecile.

"Dessaline?" she said.

"The same. Yes, he is a Marshal of France—in these days; and he is a coward, a spy, an assassin. Oh, I know him well. And you were to have married his son, Madame—a sensual, imbecile scoundrel. Now will Dessaline be hard at work to intrigue for your fortune."

"He may have it, I am sure," said the Colonel.

"May he?" said Catelan. "No, sir; we have had enough of those rascalies in France. Time avenges. But we must not let this Dessaline rob Mrs. Trafford."

Cecile smiled.

"I am promoted, you see, young ladies," she said. "I am Mrs. Trafford—thanks to M. Catelan. When will you three follow my example? There will not be such difficulties in your way as in mine."

Miss Sheldon blushed, and there was a queer look on Sir Alured's countenance, while Clara Eastlake gave an almost imperceptible glance at the Fellow of Oriel. But Earine said, laughing,

"There is the immense preliminary difficulty of not being asked."

"Easily conquered," quoth Valentine. "Young ladies know how to extract a declaration of love."

Colonel Trafford had determined to take his bride right away to a country-seat of his in the very heart of England, in the very centre of Warwickshire. He was to have Jack Eastlake's drag to the station—to break the journey at Manchester, being sure of comfortable quarters at the Queen's Hotel—and then to settle down quietly for his honeymoon in Shakspeare's country, the omphalos of the realm.

While preparations for travel were being made, Sir Alured and his son and Catelan strolled down to the lake.

"Let us see," said Catelan, "if the body is found. I don't want Mrs. Trafford to hear any thing of it before she starts."

Yes, the body was found—close to the shore at The Villa. And they had taken it into the house, and notice had been sent to the coroner.

Sir Alured gave the men money, and warned every body to say nothing about it when the wedding-party were crossing the ferry. The old baronet was a great prince in those parts, and his orders were carefully obeyed. As he walked up the hill towards Hawksmere, he said to Catelan,

"Now, my friend, what am I to do about this little American?"

"Oh, that is my future stepmamma!" exclaimed Valentine with a laugh. "Well, she's a nice child."

"Irreverent boy!" said Sir Alured. "It is a piece of luck, her coming to my house; but, as she can't stay here, now that her friend is going, I must make up my mind what to do. I don't like offering her money, Catelan."

"She'd accept it," said his son

"Yes, she would," observed Catelan. "But for your own sake, Sir Alured, the thing should be done more delicately. Give her jewels; then, if she finds herself in want of money, she can turn them into gold."

"The idea is excellent," said Sir Alured; "but how am I to get jewels in time?"

"I can help you," said Valentine, "if all my luggage was brought up here. I spent a lot of money in that rubbish when I was in the East—and among it there's a set of sapphires and opals which the Jew at Stamboul swore was the finest in the world. They're in an old-world setting of red gold—about the date of the Pharaohs, I should think. If we can find them, they'll just do."

"I would far rather Earine had them," said Sir Alured.

"My dear father! Why, the little Nereid would be unhappy if she were loaded with gems. No, no: let Miss Sheldon have them. She will look charming in them at the theatre. It is rather a pity we did not think of it earlier, so as to get them reset. That priceless antique gold will not strike the American mind."

When Colonel Trafford and his bride were in the ferry-boat, Jack Eastlake's drag having crossed already, while Earine and Emily (Clara accompanied her father) were waving their white kerchiefs, Sir Alured said to Catelan,

"Shall we go down to The Villa? I must arrange for the unfortunate woman's burial. That she should lie in the shadow of the church where Cecile was married is a curious coincidence."

"Yes, let us go," said Catelan. "I want to find out who she was. I strongly suspect."

The ladies were left to ascend the hill alone, and a boat was ordered. Soon they reached the place, and landed on the lawn. There was no one in the house except an old woman in charge, until the coroner should arrive. They ascended to the room where the body lay, and the moment Sir Alured looked on the face—disfigured as it was by the effect of the water—he recognized Miss Sheldon's companion at a certain little dinner.

"Why," exclaimed Valentine, "it is Madame Garnuchot—the woman who persecuted Earine at Rouen, and who was a spy upon you at Broad-oak, and who murdered Redfern. You remember her, Catelan?"

"Yes," he said, "I remember her. And you remember that brand upon her shoulder. We will verify its existence, that there may be no mistake in identity."

Too certainly was it the treacherous Corsican who had met sudden death on an English lake. The three men left the villa in a somewhat sober mood, and returned to Hawksmere. As they reached the shore, Sir Alured said,

"Well I must settle with that little American before I dine. Look for your jewels, Val; I'll see what can be done with them."

The jewels were soon found—a set of unique splendor.

"There are some others," said Valentine, "diamonds and rubies and things—an awful lot. If you want any more, I'll get them."

"No," replied his father; "I think this will do."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### DELICATE GROUND.

"From you, Ianthe, little troubles pass  
Like little ripples in a sunny river;  
Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,  
Cut down, and up again as blithe as ever."

WHEN Sir Alured Vivian asked Miss Emily Sheldon for an interview in his library, well did that little actress know that the crisis had arrived. Emily, as I have said, was a born actress. She always played a part, whether on the stage or off. She had no heart or soul or any thing of that sort—troublesome luxuries; she was merely a cheerful nymph, as gay as a grasshopper, as pleasant as a gleam of sunshine or a glass of champagne. She was selfish, but not sordid, and had already become rather ashamed of following Sir Alured Vivian, which she had done by Madame de Longueville's advice.

Sir Alured had no notion of women without hearts or souls. He must either love or hate. At this moment, however, he was somewhat tamed down—he perceived what an awful fool he had been to love this little Emily; he perceived also that it was not her fault, and that he had behaved rather scurrily to her. Hence he was anxious to make amends, though it was a difficult and delicate business.

Imagine, if you please, the little American reclining in a huge chair in the library, and Sir Alured standing at the table, tall and stately, old enough to be her grandfather. Arch were those bright eyes of hers, and there was just the suspicion of a smile about her lips.

"How was he to begin?"

"You remember," he said, after a few moments, "that pleasant evening by the Thames, when the sunset and the river and the sparkling wine combined to intoxicate us? You remember, I am sure."

"Oh yes," she said, with a musical laugh, which had enchanted so many an audience. "I quite remember. You asked me a question that night."

"Yes," said Sir Alured, not ungrateful to the little girl for making matters easy to him, "and you answered it. And I suppose you thought me a terrible boor when I went away without a word to you, but my friend Catelan had just brought me the news of my son's illness."

"Oh, I willingly forgive you. It was a narrow escape for me. I knew what was coming; I tried to keep it back, but I knew it must come that night; so I had made up my mind to say, 'No, No, No,' with more emphasis each time. But you were so terribly earnest and eloquent that I could not do it. I gave way at once, and became quite sentimental and lackadaisi-

cal, and said just the opposite of what I intended."

Sir Alured did not feel particularly flattered by this view of the situation.

"I thought I understood women," he said. "I certainly don't understand you."

"Of course not," she replied. "But I understand both myself and you. You are a gentleman of old family, with knightly traditions and poetic ideas—*grand seigneur et preux chevalier*. I am only an actress—not an actress by accident merely, but by nature. I am just like a flower. I rejoice to look pretty, and smell sweet, and be admired. But I have no more soul or heart, or whatever you may please to call it, than a rose or a lily. I like sunshine and gaiety and being petted: I don't want to have any of the cares and dignities of life—to marry and have children and duties—to be, perhaps, Lady Vivian, very much envied by all the world, and very much bored myself."

And therewith she rose from the vast chair in which she was buried, and gave Sir Alured Vivian the most bewitching little courtesy in the world.

"Yes, Miss Sheldon," he said. "You are an actress, I see. But you are a great deal more than an actress. You have judged me pretty well—yourself not so well. Shall I tell you something? You have got the soul and heart of a woman—but you have yet to find it out. The time will come for you, as it comes for others. And when it comes, you will remember the prediction of an old gentleman on whom you so narrowly escaped wasting the flower of your youth. What business have I plucking roses, who have reached the right age for gout and gruel?"

"You are younger than many men half your age," she replied. "That night—by the Thames—with the moonlight on the terrace, and the marvellous fragrance of the flowers around us—I did not think of your age. You seemed to me quite young."

"I was quite young for the moment," he replied. "And I am young now—for the moment. Let me ask you again what I asked that night by the Thames. Come: you say I am not always old: will you be my wife, Emily?"

"I am strongly inclined to take you at your word, before M. Catelan comes to interrupt," she said laughing. "We shall hear his knuckles at the door in a minute."

"I don't expect it," replied Sir Alured, in the same light tone. "We have had our share of tragedy, and Catelan will have nothing fresh to announce."

"He won't come in again, with a face like the man who drew Priam's curtain at the dead of night? Well in that case I'll venture to talk seriously for a few minutes. You know very well, Sir Alured Vivian, that when you asked me to come into this room it was with intent to annul that offer of yours. And do you think I would hold you to your bargain?"

"But I make the offer again," he said.

"Seriously? You have changed your mind since I entered the room: won't you change it again before I go away?"

"Will you let me talk seriously to you? I am just past seventy: you are about twenty, I suppose?"

"A very fair guess," she said.

"Well, my child, listen. I come of a long-lived family: I am comparatively young at seventy. I shall certainly live another twenty years. It has always been my belief that an old man, if he retains his mental and physical power, may make a young woman very happy. I think I could make you happy. Will you try?"

"A rash experiment," said the little actress. "Look at the matter coolly, Sir Alured. You are of the bluest blood in England: I come from Yankeeland, and have no distinct information about my grandfather. What will people say of you? And how long before I shall shock your patrician taste?"

"What people say of me has always been a matter beneath my notice. And I am not at all afraid of your doing any thing to shock my fastidiousness. You have not found out my weak point yet, Emily—clear-sighted as you are."

"Will you tell it me?"

"Of course I will, when you have answered me as I wish."

"Ah, but I don't know what you wish," she said, "and I doubt whether you know what you wish. Let me tell you how I feel in the matter, Sir Alured. That night on the terrace you were too strong for me—you carried away my previous resolution—you were *young*, as I said before. I gave way. I was yours. But after you left me, I reflected much on the folly of the thing. If you were to ask a hundred people, at least ninety-nine would say it was extremely foolish, both for you and me. And now I will tell you more. Madame de Longueville was always with me at that time, though we only met by accident at the Colossus Hotel. I never quite liked her, yet she was a pleasant companion. She gave me bad advice: that is, she advised me not to lose sight of you, but to make you pay for deserting me. I am afraid I listened to her advice too readily; for in America, you know, we estimate every thing by money. She found out where you were; she took that cottage on the lake that we might be near you. And it looks like a punishment that her death has brought me into your house—brought, indeed, a renewal of your offer. But you see I can not accept it."

"Wait," said Sir Alured. "Let me think a little. This woman—she was a French spy, and is accused of murder—was a chance acquaintance of yours. Yes, I see. And you came to Blackwater in pursuit of me. Well, you were quite right. I ought to have kept my word."

"Don't think me worse than I am," interposed Miss Sheldon. "Madame de Longue-

ville influenced me—I am too easily influenced—but I had an idea of my own. I wanted to see you again. I knew the whole thing to be very foolish—I knew that I ought to forget it altogether, but I remembered that evening on the terrace above the Thames, and I could not get the idea of you out of my mind. Very silly, wasn't it?" she asked, with a shy smile.

"I wonder," thought Sir Alured Vivian, "where the actress ends and the woman begins? I have met many women, but none so perplexing as this. Let us," he said, "forget this unfortunate Frenchwoman, who gave you such bad advice, and think of ourselves. I repeat my offer in all earnestness: I am not so eloquent as I was by the Thames, for that was a felicitous moment, but I am quite as sincere. Will you marry me, child?"

"I think," she replied, "that I admire you too much to marry you. I am only just beginning to learn the differences between people. Yours is a higher blood than mine: your marrying me would be like some American citizen marrying a black girl. I am just an actress, with an imitative faculty, and a gift of understanding people's characters: you are a man, with a character stronger than most men's, and a power of thought and action which you have never fully exercised. I understand you—I am sure I do."

"My dear child, you are wrong. You understand neither me nor yourself. Now, I will tell you your fortune. You are one of the cleverest little actresses in the world—why? Because, taking early to the stage, with your own character undeveloped, you have possessed a singular capacity for interpreting other characters, real or imaginary. Do you know what is going to happen—what is happening already? Your own character is developing, and you will lose that art of identifying yourself with others which is the secret of your success. Believe me, Miss Sheldon, you will never again be so good an actress as you were when I last saw you on the stage."

Emily Sheldon sat silent awhile, reflecting on Sir Alured's words. Then she said,

"Whether you are right or wrong, I am uncertain. But you told me I did not understand you. Will you tell me why?"

"I will. You have not discovered my fatal weakness—the weakness which has made me an isolated exile for long years. It is, that I love madly, and that I hate bitterly. I love you now;—but if you were to deceive me, I should hate you with the intensest hatred."

As he uttered those four words—*I love you now*—Emily Sheldon sprang from her chair, and stood looking at him with eyes that seemed full of fire. As he finished his sentence, she threw herself on her knees before him, exclaiming,

"You love me now? You mean it? Then I am your slave. Do with me what you will. If you send me away from you forever, I shall not be unhappy. I shall think of your words

—*you love me now.* Yes, love me now: hate me, if you will, to-morrow, so long as you love me at this moment."

The old man was taken by surprise. Still, being, as I have said, an unconscious poet, he did not at once decide that any thing new to him was necessarily an imposture. He reflected that he himself was an exceptional person, and that his declaration of love and offer of marriage to an American actress fifty years younger than himself would probably convict him of insanity in the judgment of a Great British jury. This little girl—he had guessed her character truly: still, it never occurred to him that he should develop the force and passion of that character.

Ah, and might she not be acting—she, a consummate actress? Might she not be hoaxing him, with an idea of revenge and of subsequent laughter? The idea was not pleasant. She was kneeling at his feet: he stooped forward and raised her, and saw big tears in her beautiful bright eyes, that were usually full of laughter. No, it could not be acting, this; it must be true passion. She loved him, strange as it seemed. Believing this, he drew her to his arms, saying,

"Yes, I love you, now and always. You will be my wife?"

If any one could have beheld them at this moment, it would have seemed a modern reproduction of Merlin and Vivian; not Mr. Tennyson's degraded conception of the grand old legend, but the true tradition which found for age and wisdom a pure and perfect love.

"My wife!" said the old baronet, fondly stroking Emily's fair hair as she lay in his arms.

"Do you know," said Valentine Vivian to Catalan, as they strolled along the green path beside Hawksmere Ghyll, "I am not at all certain how this interview will end."

Catalan had been thinking, as they walked and smoked, of the morning's adventure, and of Colonel Trafford and his bride. Valentine had to make the remark twice before his companion caught his meaning.

"Ha," he said, reflectively, "you think Miss Sheldon may fascinate your father, after all. What a pity!"

"Oh, I won't say that," replied Vivian. "The old gentleman is ridiculously young for his age, and ought to have married again long ago. When I marry, he will be thrown back on himself, and will be off on some wild-goose chase. I should like to see him settle down and begin to be steady."

"You would not have him marry an actress—the friend of that Corsican?"

"You are prejudiced, Catalan. She was no more the friend of that Corsican than Mrs. Trafford was. They were thrown together by accident, that is all. I think the actress is rather a nice little woman, and would make the old gentleman's latter years extremely comfortable. And, mind you, we Vivians live long,

one of us, *tempore* Edward III., lived to 117. If Sir Alured should live to be a hundred, I shall not be surprised. And would you have him spend the last thirty years of his life without any one to love him?"

"Well," replied Catalan, "I can't quite agree with you, either as to the wisdom or the probability of my friend's marrying again."

"I will bet you this diamond," said Valentine, taking a superb gem from his little finger, "to a box of those cigars which you are always so unwilling to part with, that my dear papa announces this day his intention to give me a stepmamma in the person of Miss Emily Sheldon."

"I don't often bet," replied Catalan, laughing, "but that wager I *will* accept."

"And you will lose. I saw it in their eyes. I believe they are a well-matched couple. Sir Alured will become quite a boy again, with that merry little rogue to help him. Fancy calling her 'mamma!' I'll do it at dinner this day. Come, Catalan, I'll make you another bet, if you like—that they have a child within a twelvemonth."

"Pshaw!" said the Frenchman, "you are *entêté* to-day. I shall claim your diamond this evening."

"Will you?" laughed Vivian.

## CHAPTER XLV.

MASTER LIONEL.

"Oculus domini saginat equum."

JOHN GRAINGER and Mary Ashow have too long been neglected. Their wedding-day was fixed just ten chapters ago. But a novelist cannot completely mirror the world; he can attend only to one set of people at a time, and must leave all the others to their fate. I often think it might be a good plan to print a story in parallel columns, so that the reader at a glance might see what all the different characters were doing at the same moment. In column A the hero would be flirting with somebody—not the heroine: in column B the villain would be plotting hideously against the hero's peace of mind: in column C the heroine would be confessing to her confidential friend that she thinks the villain a much nicer-looking young man than the hero, only he hasn't got enough money to marry upon: and so on to the end of the chapter. I ought to take out a patent for this invention.

The most rigorous limitation of humanity is that we can only see one scene at one time. The capacity of seeing and harmonizing many simultaneous scenes belongs to a higher order of existence. Shall we ever attain thereto? Who knows? But, of a certainty, it would much conduce to our happiness if we could behold the many lines of action wherein we are interested at a single glance—if we could see friends and enemies, and those who are neither friends nor

enemies, all moving in their own grooves to help or to baffle us.

Farmer Ashow found it uncommonly dull at Skelthwaite during the time which preceded the wedding. His own farm of Broadoak Mill was in great want of the master's eye—not to mention John Grainger's clear brain and strong arms. He pined to be back among his wheat and oats, his barley and beans: he knew well that every thing would in his absence be mismanaged, and was always fretting on the subject. The moment John and Mary were married, he was determined to leave them to their own devices. He wouldn't let the farm go to rack and ruin any longer just because they were love-making.

The marriage-day came at last, and with it a considerable concourse of dalesmen—Graingers, and friends of Graingers.

"They're a kindly lot up here in the north," said the old farmer. "They come in crowds whenever there's plenty to eat and drink—be it a wedding or be it a funeral."

This, however, was rather hard upon the statesmen of Westmorland, who paid such attention to their friends only, and who, being always generously hospitable, regarded free-handed hospitality as a law of nature.

But the wedding-day having arrived, and Mary Ashow having been conveyed to church in one of the local equipages, specially built to travel those narrow hilly roads, the farmer began to see daylight. I have already had to describe one bridal progress, and it really looks as if I should be obliged to describe several more. We have seen Fighting Charlie Trafford and his lady-love go merrily to church on a four-in-hand drag. And now Mary Ashow and her blind lover travel on the shandrydan of the county, followed by a train of gigantic farmers. How shall Sir Alured and his Emily go to church? How Vivian and Earine?

By-the-way, before this marriage is solemnized, there is one little matter to be mentioned in reference to Mary Ashow. She was half a Romanist once, we know, and told her little innocent secrets to one who was not even half a priest. The infatuation was past. When she found herself brought face to face with great troubles—first those of others and next her own—she forgot that folly of girlhood. It is remarkable that your neophyte, male or female, is in most cases a young person with an unsatisfactory career. Give a girl a manly lover, give a woman a loving husband, and 'tis precious little she'll want of a priest. Mary was going quietly to be married by a Protestant clergyman, never having thought it worth while to tell her father or John Grainger that she had once thought herself half a Catholic. It is not always the case that superstitious malady ends so healthily.

At the gate of the church-yard Farmer Ashow met Lionel Redfern—the new Squire. At first he was rather astonished. Years had passed since the two cousins came down together to

Broadoak Avon, and fished and shot and boated, and made love to all the pretty girls of the neighborhood. Years had passed; the presence of Rupert Redfern had been an accepted fact: he seemed a part of the original scene—as much at home as the great oak-tree which gave the manor its name of Broadoak. His death was a terrible blow to all the loyal subjects of the manor. The appearance of his cousin, so strangely like him, was a singular surprise to those who had forgotten Lionel's existence—which was the majority.

Farmer Ashow was in the minority; yet even Farmer Ashow was at the moment astonished. There was the exact semblance of the Squire. Lionel Redfern had heard on his way that this was the marriage morning, so he came across from the town at which he had slept straight to the church.

"Glad to meet you again, Ashow," he said, "on such a fortunate occasion. 'Tis a good many years since I saw you last, and a good many things have happened—and little Mary, whom I remember a plump baby, is now going to be a sedate matron."

"You startle me, Master Lionel," said the farmer. "You're more like the Squire—that was—than ever, if it wasn't for that wonderful fine beard. Certainly they do grow long beards in foreign parts. You're come home to live at Broadoak, I hope. It's quite time you married and settled down now."

"Can you find me a wife, Ashow? If so, we'll think about it. Meanwhile, suppose we go in to the wedding: your dear little daughter will be waiting—and it's a shame to keep a lady waiting under such circumstances. I'm going home with you afterwards, Ashow: I mean to see the end of the fun, and shall expect you to receive me hospitably."

"You couldn't have given me greater pleasure than by coming just now, Master Lionel," said the farmer.

Then they entered the little church, where already the perpetual curate was waiting to begin. The dark interior was crowded. Farmer Ashow got quite a new idea of family and friendly connections when he saw how the Graingers and their friends rallied round one of their own people, though not half a dozen of them had seen him before—and those who had, when he was a mere boy.

"They don't do this sort of thing in the South," he whispered to the Squire.

"No," replied Redfern. "The South is civil, but the North is friendly. There isn't a man here who wouldn't find young Grainger a ten-pound note if he wanted it. You don't see that in the South."

How happy and how beautiful looked Mary Ashow as she led her sightless husband down the narrow aisle and out into the sunny graveyard! The dalesmen looked at her with infinite admiration. Lionel Redfern, as he came forward to help her into the curious vehicle in which the young couple were to return, thought



he had never seen so charming a creature—so loving, and tender, and sweet.

"As to that giant Grainger," he said to Farmer Ashow, "he reminds me of Orion. Only he has been more fortunate."

This remark Lionel Redfern made as the post-chaise which had brought him thither was starting on its way towards Skelthwaite. I fear Farmer Ashow did not understand it, but he loyally replied,

"Yes, Master Lionel."

It was a curious procession back from the church to John Grainger's homestead. The road was full of windings, up hill and down dale: on the brow of any hill Lionel Redfern could see the stalwart mountaineers, striding easily along a good five miles an hour. The bride and bridegroom had the start, but their single horse could not ascend the hills at any thing like the rate which these dalesmen walked. Squire Redfern, doubtful about the roads, had come with four horses; but he told the postilions to drive slowly, and lazily smoked an enormous meerschaum, and talked to Farmer Ashow. The farmer was flattered, and the dalesmen were impressed by the Squire's appearance with four horses.

A prodigious meal was prepared for the numerous guests, and ample honor they did to it. Never were goose-pies eaten more rapidly, or washed down with more copious draughts of strong ale and Morocco. And, after this mighty feast, there were games upon the grass: wrestling and running and hurdle-jumping, all in friendly fashion.

Now Lionel Redfern had with him, as a personal attendant, a young Arab whom he had picked up in his wanderings; a lad of eighteen, as clever as a cat or a monkey. When the wrestling was over, the Squire asked the conqueror—a stalwart fellow of about six feet six—whether he would wrestle with this Arab. The mighty dalesman willingly consented. The result was original, and caused shouts of laughter from the spectators. For, when the Westmorland giant approached the Arab, the latter sprang suddenly right over his head; and before he had time to turn, planted himself as firmly on his shoulders as the Old Man of the Sea on Sindbad's.

"Well," said Farmer Ashow, "I wonder what's the answer to that trick."

"Lie down and roll, I should think," said Squire Redfern.

The games were over at last. In they trooped to supper. After supper came the great ceremony of the bride's sitting in state, to receive presents in her lap. But before this final procedure Lionel Redfern invited them all to drink the health of the bridegroom and bride. And his speech on the occasion ran thus:

"MY FRIENDS,—I have been called home by the death of a cousin, whom I loved like a brother, and who was so like me that we could hardly be known apart, to take possession of an estate in the South. And my oldest friend on that

estate is Farmer Ashow, whose beautiful daughter has to-day been married. The man she has married is worthy of her, I think—which is saying a good deal—but he has lately undergone a great misfortune. Lightning struck him blind. It is a terrible affliction, and I hope he will recover from it; but I can tell him there are worse afflictions. It is better to have sightless eyes than to have nobody to love you. I observe that my friend John Grainger's wife has the brightest and clearest eyes in the world; and I am sure she will always be ready to lend them to him."

This speech was much applauded, and was followed by a big drink. Then came the crowning ceremony. The bride sat in state on the settle by the fire-place, and all who had gifts for her presented them. To drop them in the lady's lap is the proper method; but as one cousin of the Graingers had brought a new wheelbarrow, and another a sow with thirteen young pigs, this was not quite practicable. But some of the women-folk had brought thimbles and pincushions, and similar necessities of feminine life—so that pretty Mary's lap soon got very full indeed. One excellent old lady, a great-aunt of John Grainger's, sent a pair of crutches, with a note to say that they were no longer any use to herself, as she was bedridden, but that Mary might perhaps find them serviceable in sixty or seventy years. The old lady was ninety-seven.

Lionel Redfern stood looking on—and smoked his meerschaum, for every body was smoking—and was greatly amused. At length it seemed that the last offering had been made. The company was growing thin: a good many of them would have to walk twenty or thirty miles across the fells to their homes. When it was clear that Mary Ashow's lap was to have no more offerings from the neighbors, the Squire stepped forward and dropped therein a piece of paper. She, not knowing what it might be, thrust it into her bosom: then taking up the burden of gifts in her apron, she said,

"I am very tired."

John Grainger, blind as he was, had watched her with all his other senses. When she spoke he came forward, and gave her his arm and they were gone in a few moments.

"Now, my dear Ashow," said the Squire, "find me a bed, if you can. That young Arab who astonished your gigantic wrestler will sleep on a mat outside my door, and will kill any one who attempts to disturb me during the night. To-morrow I have something to say to you: but to-night I pine for sleep."

For a Westmorland farm, every body was late next morning. However, in due course of time Farmer Ashow and his daughter and son-in-law and the Squire were assembled at table. It was a pleasant party. Mary was bashful, and her husband content, and the Farmer and the Squire a little humorous. Just in the middle of the meal Mary said:

"Dear me, Mr. Redfern, you gave me a scrap of paper yesterday, and I thrust it in here"—I

can't illustrate her pretty action, for they taught me Greek instead of teaching me to draw—"and I haven't the least idea what has become of it. I must run up and see."

She ran up, and was not long away. It was a very scrunched-up bit of paper which she held up to sight between rosy-tipped finger and thumb.

"Only think!" she exclaimed, "I have positively been sleeping on it! Whatever it is, I hope it's not spoilt. Look, father."

Farmer Ashow looked, and lo, it was a note of the Bank of England for one thousand pounds.

"You are too generous, Squire," said Farmer Ashow.

"'Tis no generosity at all," replied Lionel Redfern. "It is not at all generous to give away what you don't even miss. But it may be of some use to your daughter and her husband."

"Money is always of use," said old Ashow, apophthegmatically.

"Not when you've got too much of it. Every man's income ought to be in proportion to his intellect. One fellow has brains enough to spend a hundred a year properly; three hundred would drive him wild. There are men who might be trusted with a hundred thousand, but I doubt if any human intellect would not break down under a million a year. But let us change the subject. You are all going home to Broadoak Mill Farm, I suppose."

"Yes. We thought of starting to-day, if possible."

"You can all come in my post-chaise, which I brought from Keswick. I want you to go with me to Hawksmere—Sir Alured Vivian's."

"Have you heard how Mr. Valentine is?" asked the farmer.

"No, but I want to find out; and I have some important business to transact there. Will you come with me?"

"Of course we will," said Farmer Ashow.

The necessary arrangements were quickly made—as quickly, at least, as could be expected where a bride is in the case. Skelthwaite is up among the unwatered fells, about thirty miles from Hawksmere; and the roads by no means resembling the level turnpike of our home counties, it was decided to spend a night on the way. Nor was the journey on either day accomplished with headlong rapidity. For it lay through some of the most delicious parts of the lake country; and Lionel Redfern, who had not been there since the days of an Oxford reading-party, wanted to refresh his memory at every point of interest. As they drove along the terraced road, with green fells above them on one hand, and bright lakes or rushing rivers far below on the other, Mary saw and enjoyed the unimaginable beauty of the country. Yes, and she explained it to her husband, and told him as they passed along of every village nestling among soft folds of the fells, of every distant waterfall looking like a line of silver down the green hillside, of every giant mountain that at intervals seemed to raise himself out of the mass, and

show his monstrous head, and gaze upon the travellers:

"Oh! those mountains, their infinite movement!  
Still moving with you;  
For, ever some new head and breast of them  
Thrusts into view  
To observe the intruder; you see it  
If quickly you turn  
And, before they escape you, surprise them."

John Grainger grew quite lively as they travelled, and declared that his wife's descriptions enabled him to see the whole passing panorama.

"I dare say," said the Squire, "that you in your mind's-eye see a scene more beautiful than what we actually see. Indeed, I suppose that no two people see things alike, and strong imaginations mislead the eye. The poet sees brooding upon the world

"The light that never was, on sea or land."

And clear-sighted and far-sighted poets have retained their spiritual vision long after their physical organ had given way. Homer was blind when he saw his marvellous wanderer in the cool halls of Circe; and Milton, when he beheld Eve on the lonely lawns of Eden, making her very simple toilet by a pellucid stream."

Farmer Ashow reflected that the Squire "talked like a book." John Grainger enjoyed such talk, having of late traversed the realms of gold which Homer holds in fee simple.

It was about noon of their second day when they reached the margin of Blackwater. It was necessary to dismount and cross the ferry. Mr. and Mrs. White, of the Ferry Inn, began to believe that there was to be no end of newcomers to Hawksmere and the hamlet. Only the previous day Colonel Trafford had taken away his bride, not without liberal largesse: now another party was arriving. The Oxford men weren't gone yet: their tutor was a good deal smitten by Clara Eastlake, and had even composed some Latin verse about her, to ease his mind; and the men were very well pleased with their quarters. So the place was full to overflowing.

The recent catastrophe had not driven them from the lake. Indeed it was decided that the catastrophe would not have occurred if there had been local knowledge.

But Earine, who was managing one boat, was accustomed to the calm Greek seas, and had not learned to anticipate these sudden gusts from the hills; while Colonel Trafford, even if there were reason to deem him more skillful, was, it must be remembered, making love all the time. But there was a larger yacht than either of those which had been capsized: a boat built for an eccentric artist who a year or two previously had lived at The Villa, and who had invented a principle which he thought would secure absolute safety on the water. It was a queer-looking craft, with a fore-and-aft rig, not very fast, but roomy and comfortable, and Sir Alured secured it for the use of himself and the other lovers. For Catelan had lost his wager,



"The two branches of literature are combined sometimes, I have heard."

"Well," said Tom, "shall we go and call on our fair friends? I've some business in their neighborhood."

"And a box for Mrs. Blogg in your pocket, eh? How that charming creature fascinates you! Wait awhile: what have you been drinking?"

"Gin and seltzer," said Tom, looking at his empty tumbler.

"You are a Goth—a Vandal. *Garçon*, some Champagne-cup. Champagne goes to the cerebellum, and stimulates new combinations."

An idea had occurred to Vionnet: Madame de Longueville having suddenly disappeared, the aristocratic Sydenham seminary would want a mistress. Now, in the delicate little negotiations which often passed through his hands, the mistress of a ladies' school was a useful kind of *confidante*. Would it be worth while to put Miss Blogg in as Madame's successor? She would be a very obedient slave, he could see, especially if he got a pecuniary hold upon her; but would the ladies who patronized the establishment accept her as the successor of so charming and refined a person as Madame de Longueville? He thought it might be done. The Blogg must at once go into mourning for her dear friend; and then call at the houses of the parents and tell the tragical story of Madame's death, varying it a little, so that the deceased might be supposed to have sent a message to her faithful assistant, asking her to continue her scholastic labors. Yes, the Blogg might be taught how to do it—and might subsequently, perhaps, be made useful. At any rate, it was an amusing little intrigue. Vionnet decided to accompany Tom Harington on his diurnal visit to the Blogg mansion.

Aye, there they were again—Arabella and Sarah—looking as amiable as a couple of cherubim, though they had been fighting like the Kilkenny cats just before. Oh, the beautiful hypocrisy of ill-tempered women! Surely it is the greatest gift possessed by the sex. Here's a girl—I have seen such—who is the terror of her family. She knows how to sulk. When any thing puts her out, she makes the establishment wretched: papa, mamma, her brothers and sisters, even the servants, dread her sullen temper, and do all they can to appease her. She has the airiest corner in summer, the snug-gest in winter; the best cut of the mutton and the last glass of the wine; her sisters mend her stockings while she reads the freshest novels from Mudie's. By-and-by there comes a gay young bachelor to flutter the dove-cot. If she condescends to flirt with him none of her sisters dare to be more than civil. She has the pick, and takes the richest and handsomest. She is as amiable and affectionate to him—and to her dear papa and mamma, and brothers and sisters, in his presence—as if she had been nurtured on Devonshire cream and virgin honey. When she is not present, the whole family praise

her to him. Willingly would they break every article of the moral law in order to get rid of her. Well, the poor young man proposes—is accepted—all goes merry as the marriage-bell. But, by the piper that played before Moses! that girl will throw off her veil of hypocrisy before her wedding-day is twelve hours old, and the luckless bridegroom will go to the nuptial chamber with the melancholy conviction that his wife has the devil's own temper. I don't want to interfere with the infernal theories of Dante and Quevedo, but I suspect all women of this type will be locked up together in one jail. Among them will be Mrs. and Miss Blogg.

Weren't the angular matron and the dumpy maiden amiable to their respective admirers? It was rather early in the afternoon, and Mrs. Blogg had some shopping to do; would the gentlemen walk with them? Of course they were delighted: suburban shopping is such a charming recreation. Off they started, after a glass of Marsala: and tall Tom Harington strode forward at so rapid a pace with Mrs. Blogg, that Vionnet and the charming Sarah were left behind. This was just what he wanted.

"Miss Blogg," he said, "I have a sad piece of news for you."

"What?" she exclaimed, thinking at first, from what she had heard of Frenchmen, that he was about to announce his intention of suffocating himself with charcoal, because he loved her and felt himself unworthy of her.

"Madame de Longueville is dead."

"Dead!"

"Yes, she was drowned in a boating excursion. She had just strength enough left to send her love to you, and to say she hoped you would try to carry on the school."

"Did she really?" exclaimed Miss Blogg, beginning to blubber, and mopping her eyes with a rather dingy handkerchief—Vionnet all the while thinking what a fool she was to try that game upon him.

"I have been thinking the matter over," he said, after a pause, "and I do not see why you should not carry out Madame's wishes. It will cost a little money, of course; but I suppose your brother can help you."

"Not very much, I fear," she replied. "He is getting on, but he has many expenses."

"Well, he and I can doubtless hit on a plan between us. I shall be very glad to do my share."

"Oh, M. Vionnet, how kind you are!" she exclaimed, with an affectionate look that chilled him all down the backbone.

"I'll talk to Mr. Blogg about it," he said. "I shall see him presently, I suppose. The first thing for you to do will be to put on mourning for Madame, and then to call on the parents of all the pupils. You know their names and addresses, no doubt."

"Oh yes; I was there before Madame came."

They were just approaching Tom Harington and Mrs. Blogg, who awaited them in front of

a confectioner's shop. Both ladies had a mania for ices: Arabella Blogg was wont to eat so many that she was always in arrears with her dressmaker. But now there were a couple of cavaliers to pay for them, and Arabella was happy.

"Don't mention this to your sister-in-law at present," said Vionnet. "She is a silly, flighty, gossiping little thing."

"Oh, indeed she is," replied Miss Blogg.

"Amiable creature!" thought the *mouchard*.

To eat inferior ices in a stuffy tart-shop, looking out on a dull, dusty suburban street, in company with a couple of women neither beautiful nor refined, does not seem a lively employment. Tom Harington did it as if he liked it, and drank the fiery sherry of the place with an appearance of real delight. But then, you see, he was wildly in love with Mrs. Blogg—not, of course, that he meant any harm, for Blogg was the best fellow he had ever known, and association with him and his charming wife had begun to wean Tom from his Bohemian recklessness. Such, at least, was the Bohemian's own statement. There can be few occupations more interesting for a young married woman than weaning a Bohemian. I think it ought to be warranted *not dangerous*.

The young ladies ate a great many ices—more than any sane man would take in six months. But nothing nice ever disagrees with women. When they had run up a tolerable score, which Vionnet paid *en prince*, they started homeward. It was close on the time for Blogg's advent—indeed, when the party returned to his residence they found him at the door. He received his visitors rather sulkily, but brightened into something like good temper when he heard Vionnet's proposal about Miss Blogg. That young person's career in life seemed dubious; but her brother felt sure that all would go well if she once became a school-mistress. It is generally known that the dullest individual can obtain success in that particular line.

"But this French lady deceased," said the attorney. "Who inherits her property?"

"I am the representative of her family," said Vionnet, "and I shall be happy to deal with Miss Blogg on easy terms."

"You will have no difficulty in proving your title?"

"I fancy not," he replied. "I have been Madame de Longueville's sole agent in England, and the only person who knows her affairs. From me, indeed, she obtained the money with which she purchased the school."

Which was quite true.

"Oh, I see," said Blogg. "Then I may consider you as the actual proprietor of the establishment."

"You may. Of course, as I am responsible to others, I must make a definite bargain with your sister. Let the furniture and good-will be valued, and arrange the terms of payment so that they may not fall too heavily upon her."

No need to pause over these details of busi-

ness. Of course matters were arranged as Vionnet had proposed. Miss Blogg made her round among the parents of pupils, who were greatly edified by her sincere grief (a trifle too vociferous, perhaps) for Madame de Longueville's death. Blogg got the property valued, and drew up an agreement whereby his sister had to pay for it in half-yearly installments. Meanwhile Mrs. Blogg was occupied in weaning her Bohemian.

As the Blogg family are not the most interesting characters in this romance, I think it may be as well to relate with sufficient brevity what occurred—and to return to them no more. Miss Blogg was very successful in collecting together Madame de Longueville's pupils, and for some time strove to imitate Madame de Longueville's style of dealing with them. But it was not natural to her. She must be either tyrannical or servile. Now that her servile period was over, and she was her own mistress, the tyrannic tendency was developed. She worried her little pupils, and bullied her female assistants, and insulted her "professors." Hence it may be supposed that the Sydenham seminary gradually fell off in its popularity.

Then of course there was a difficulty in making the payments to Vionnet. And, oddly enough, he demanded punctual payment. It was not his fault. Marshal Dessalino had made so unfavorable a report of his conduct at head-quarters that he was abruptly dismissed, and informed that he had better remain beyond the limits of France. Very well did Vionnet know what that meant, and much too wise was he to run the risk of returning. But, as a result, he found himself in pecuniary difficulty. Supplies were stopped. He had been living like a prince, and now was suddenly a pauper. Of course he had debts—people who fancy they possess unlimited incomes always have debts—and he saw no way of paying them. So he was compelled to persecute the unlucky Miss Blogg: and the last I heard of the young person is tragical indeed. It was a Saturday afternoon; and, having worried her few remaining pupils all the week, she was about to take them to the Crystal Palace by way of compensation. About a fortnight previously an ill-looking man, with a red comforter round his neck, had called and delivered to her an oblong slip of blue paper—which, as it looked dangerous, she had sent on to her brother the attorney. But that gentleman was occupied in quarrelling with his wife, and quite forgot his sister's troubles.

Hence was it that on the afternoon in question, just as the little party were about to start, there drove up to the gate a heavy phaeton drawn by a heavy quadruped, and containing two thick-set men, who had evidently forgotten the chief use of water. Somehow or other, this arrival struck dismay into Miss Blogg. Not without reason. These two burly fellows had come to convey her to prison, and they seemed rather to enjoy the fun. Taking a lady was of course a rare event, and therefore the pleasant-

er. Poor Miss Blogg, utterly bewildered, was driven off behind the heavy quadruped to Cripple-gate, and consigned to dirty, dreary, uncomfortable quarters.

England was once [*tempore* Edward III. perhaps] a chivalrous country. It is now above all things a commercial country. The law regards a man's property as more important than the man himself: you may half kill him with less risk than you may steal a penny from his person or a turnip from his field. Laws are made in the House of Commons, and the majority of that House are tradesmen. We have seen within a month or two girls under age committed to prison for the costs of some suit in which they were interested: one child, of fifteen or so, was taken from an orphan-school to be shut up in Whitecross Street. And why? Because the attorneys wanted their money. For this reason alone an innocent girl, incapable of understanding what the quarrel is about, may be thrown into a sordid den, and the beauty of her young life lost forever. If the intelligent foreigner should ever ask you what is the most sacred thing in England, you can tell him in two words—not the courage of men, or the honor of women, or the sanctity of religion—

No: *law costs*.

Miss Blogg did not remain long in confinement: her brother, being one of the holy craft, extricated her without much difficulty. Still, her absence was long enough to ruin her "seminary:" for ill news travels fast, and the deserted governesses did not know what to do, and the parents came and took away their little ones. Hence, when the Blogg emerged into the light of day, she found herself penniless, and her occupation gone.

It is needless to say that, Vionnet's affairs having got into so complete a muddle, his liberal offer to Tom Harington came to nothing. In fact, the Frenchman had vanished: he was not to be found in that pleasantly mysterious hostel where the Champagne-cup was so drinkable; and poor Harington was forced to the conclusion that the ten pounds a week on which he had set his heart would never reach his pocket. A confounded shame, he thought it: this little addition to his income would have enabled him to quench his thirst in a more elegant and expensive manner. However, it was not to be: so he surrendered his poetic dreams of iced Roederer, and returned to his old friend flavored with the berries of a plant which Linnæus places in the *Diecea Monadelphica*.

And, on the other hand, Tom Harington was in hot water with George Blogg. That young gentleman was long-suffering—pachydermatous, in fact, as to every thing save money. But he lived in a street that talked; and Tom Harington's hansom was very frequently outside his front door for a considerable time, causing such excitement that female heads were thrust through every window on both sides of the way; and Blogg received at intervals anonymous letters from kind friends, who thought it their duty to

look after his wife. Even an attorney may be enraged at last on a question of feminine honor. Blogg determined to have it out with his wife.

He was routed, horse and foot. Mrs. Blogg scolded him with frightful severity: these angular women have a fine command of language, with shrill shrieking voices, which have evidently been imitated by the artist who contrived the railway whistle. After a fine series of objurgations, she went deliberately into hysterics, which is a woman's last resource, in difficult cases—and which invariably succeeds, even with an attorney.

However, if his wife was too much for him, he determined to have it out with Tom Harington: so he wrote that gentleman a savage letter, requesting him never to come near his house again. Tom, who was beginning to find his visits expensive, did not even answer the letter. Blogg thought he had triumphed. Ah, how many a foolish husband prematurely thinks likewise!

I have heard—let us hope it is not true—that when Mrs. Blogg found Tom Harington's visits ceased, she attacked her husband, made him confess what he had done, and caused him to send an abject apology to our gallant friend. I have even heard that Tom Harington is on visiting terms at Mrs. Blogg's to this day. For the sake of male human nature, let us hope this is untrue. Still, it takes some time to wean a Bohemian.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### A VOICE FROM THE DEAD.

"Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale."

LIONEL REDFERN was not devoid of information concerning Valentine Vivian's long and strange illness. He had a somewhat exciting communication to make to him, and he took M. Catelan into council on the subject, asking him whether he deemed it safe to lead Vivian back to any of the incidents which had troubled his brain.

"I think his intellect is quite sound and clear," replied Catelan. "At any rate, I should risk it; for the circumstances of his past life must be recalled occasionally, and it is well that he should learn to endure their recall. But I apprehended no danger: I never saw so complete a recovery: it is a marvellous triumph of French medical art."

Redfern, fortified by Catelan's advice, sought an early interview with Valentine, and broached the subject.

"You must forgive me," he said, "if I pain you, but it is necessary for me to refer to the death of my cousin, and of his wife, Lady Eva."

"I can bear any thing you have to say," replied Vivian, with a melancholy smile. "I have passed through the furnace, and survived. Nothing can harm me now."

"You and Lady Eva were great friends," said Redfern.

"Old playmates in her childhood. There were ten years between us. We were on the most intimate terms possible. We were brother and sister."

"Forgive me if I seem impertinent—but there was nothing like flirtation between you—nothing, I mean, that poor Rupert could complain of."

"I assume, Mr. Redfern," said Vivian, "that you would not make these suggestions without valid reason?"

"Certainly not," he said promptly. "I have a letter of my cousin Rupert's, which I wish to communicate to you. But let me first venture to ask what were the exact relations between Lady Eva and yourself?"

"Well," replied Vivian, "I will be frank with you. I looked upon Eva as my sister, and always treated her as such. But she, poor little girl, did not quite appreciate Redfern—who was the best fellow in the world, but did not thoroughly understand his wife—and she had no children to occupy her mind—and she certainly had a strange liking for me. I should not have thought much of it but for a very curious incident. I was half mad in those days, you know—in consequence of a sun-stroke I had, out in the *Ægean*—and I did a good many wild things."

And then he told Redfern the story of the confessional with perfect accuracy. His memory had returned to him, even of that period when his mood was wildest; and he often laughed himself over the mad days of highway robbery, and wondered whether he should ever be found out.

"Now, see," said the Squire. "I have a letter here from poor old Rupert, which you must read before its contents are known to any one else. And you and I must between us decide to whom its contents should be made known."

He handed to Vivian the letter which he had read in his quiet retreat at Damascus, and which had brought him to England. A part of this letter has already been printed. It proceeded thus:

"\* \* \* I married, my dear Lionel, the most loving and lovable woman in the world. This by some strange means I know, though I have never had the power to break through a kind of magic partition which exists between us. I can not love her as she needs to be loved, and she can not see that I long to do so, but am unable. Do you understand? I fear not. It must seem so absurd to a by-stander, this foolish game of cross-purposes. I would give all Broadoak Avon—if it were not entailed upon you, Lionel—to be able to talk to Eva as I know her cousin Valentine can talk to a woman. That boy has a magnetic power. There is not a horse in my stables that does not whinny when he comes near; my big mastiff, Thor, walks about the grounds after me when Vivian is not here; when he is, the dog lies at his feet

all day. And—I must tell you—he has a strange influence over Eva.

"They ought to have married—perhaps hereafter they will marry. They were young together. I cast no blame on Valentine; if he has influenced Eva, it is, in my belief, unconsciously. But she is always happier in his presence, always thinking of him in his absence. Only last night I came up late to our chamber: a night-lamp was burning, and she lay asleep, with lips half open, and her abundant brown hair loose upon the white pillow. She was murmuring something in her sleep—I bent down to listen. It was—

"'Valentine! Valentine!'

"Yes, she always thinks of him, always dreams of him. And I have made a resolve which is foolish, I know—which is wicked, you and all the world will say. I can not help it. I am in the way here. I will not go on day after day, and year after year, just managing my estates, and breeding shorthorns, and riding to hounds, and shooting pheasants. I am weary of such a monotonous life. I intend to go into the next world, and leave this one free for Eva and her cousin to be happy. I have got a new French poison from a chemist in the *Palais Royal*; it is vegetable, acts slowly, weakens you gradually, so he says. I mean to take it—and go.

"I know all you will say. I am a fool. I am a coward. I am committing a crime of the worst kind. If I were only to talk lovingly to Eva my difficulties would be over. This, and much more, you would say, if you were here instead of in Asia. Happily, my dear Lionel, I am beyond reach of your argument. I can do as I please, although I know it is wrong. But my resolve is fixed: and now, stretching my spirit towards yours through the thick darkness, across immeasurable spaces of sea and of land, I simply say, Farewell.

"These last words of mine are for yourself, and for whosoever else you think right.

"RUPERT REDFERN."

After reading through this strange document, Vivian sat silent for a while. Then he said:

"Redfern was the very last man I could have conceived doing such a thing as this. He must have been mad."

"We are all mad sometimes," said the Squire. "Rupert would scarcely have done this thing if he could have foreseen its terrible consequences."

"No, indeed. Poor Eva! It broke her heart to lose him, and be accused of murdering him. I wonder if they are together now, and understand each other. There *ought* to be another world, to redress the evils of this."

"What had better be done as to making the contents of this letter public?"

"My impression is that the facts should be stated to every one connected with the family. Then they will soon spread farther. Eva's memory must be cleared from the stain upon it. There was also a Frenchwoman suspected

—but she is dead—drowned, strange to say, in this very lake."

"I quite agree with you," said Redfern. "The contents of the letter should be made known at once to your father and his friends, and you will know to whom the intelligence should be communicated by post."

"Lord Alvescott, first of all," said Vivian. "Eva's father, you know. He will be quite sure to make the thing known. Indeed, I should not be surprised if he were to make more fuss than is at all necessary or desirable."

When the conference was over, Redfern and Vivian joined the rest of the party, and the Squire's letter was read to them.

"One less crime for Teresa Moretti," said Catelan. "I am glad she was not a murderer, at any rate."

And then he told what he knew of the history of that Corsican woman who had met her doom in the waters of an English mere.

"She was very cruel to me," said Earine, "but I have long ago forgiven her, and I think we ought to put a head-stone to her grave."

"So do I," said Emily Sheldon. "She was very good to me, only she persuaded me to do something very mean. But I am forgiven," she went on, looking at Sir Alured, "and so I can forgive her freely."

"Ah," said Catelan, "we must not blame her. She was a Corsican. I have studied that island and its race. Love first made her a traitress; better so than to be traitorous through hate. She has been the enemy of us all—all at least whom she knew—and so let us erect a stone in her memory. Colonel Trafford and his wife will join us. I will write the epitaph in very choice Italian; and I will say therein that though she was wicked, even for a Corsican, yet Corsicans more wicked have filled imperial thrones."

"You are bitter, Catelan," said Valentine. "She was outmaneuvered, you know. Well do I remember that day when I let loose a rat in the hall at Broadoak, and she ran up stairs so fast that I got possession of her letters. She was Madame de Petigny Garnuchot then."

"She shall have her head-stone," said Sir Alured. "She has been able to do little harm; and, from all we hear, she was getting better of late. And if you won't write an amiable epitaph in Italian, Catelan, my daughter here shall write one in Greek."

Sir Alured Vivian, you see, had accepted Earine as his daughter, and was anxious to see her placed in that position. And Valentine, when in a gay humor, was wont wickedly to address Miss Sheldon as "Mamma." And, when father and son were alone together, Sir Alured was always urging Valentine to arrange his marriage.

"Let us be married on the same day, Val," he would say. "It will astonish the natives and disarm the critics."

"I don't know, sir. They will find out you

are much too old for Miss Sheldon—and that I have been mad—and that I don't know my wife's name. She doesn't know it herself. De l'Isle is a good fancy name enough; but one ought to have further information. Perhaps she is a pirate's daughter."

"Confound you, Val," said Sir Alured, "there is no making you serious. Don't hesitate any longer. Do you mean to desert Earine, and make her break her heart? She is my daughter, sir, whether she becomes your wife or not."

"Well," replied Vivian, "you know why I have hesitated. When you remember how you found me, can you wonder that I hesitated? But you shall have your way. Fix time and place with Miss Sheldon—and Earine and I will be dutiful children, and accompany you to the altar."

"Good!" said the Baronet. "More marriage fees for the perpetual curate of Garthwaite. Pity that Oxford man doesn't make up his mind to marry Miss Eastlake; then we could kill three couple of birds with one stone."

"Excellent idea!" exclaimed Valentine. "Leave it to me. You fix your day with Mamma, and I'll do all the rest."

Therewith, leaving his father, he went in search of Jack Eastlake.

"Jack," he said, "we shall want you to drive us to church very soon. The governor and I are going to be married."

Eastlake, who never saw any thing that was going on before his eyes, expressed extreme astonishment.

"Yes, old boy, it's a fact. Sir Alured is going to marry the little American."

"Why, surely, he is rather older than she is."

"Rather. Fifty years, more or less. And I'm going to marry Miss Delisle."

"Oh, of course, of course," said Jack, knowingly. "I was sure of that, long ago—else I should have proposed to her myself."

"D—d glad you didn't, Jack. Girls are fickle—and you're such a confoundedly good-looking fellow, you know."

"Do you think so, really?"

"Of course I do. But there's another couple to be married—Powys and Miss Eastlake."

"Why," exclaimed Jack, "you don't mean to say they have been going on with one another."

"Going on! I like the phrase. My dear Jack, you are a young widower with a pretty daughter. Let me advise you. Marry her off, and marry again. Powys, Fellow and Tutor of Oriel—Powys of Powysland, they tell me—lots of livings in the family—sure of a college living, at any rate—egad, those spectacles of his are worth five hundred a year."

"I like him very much," said Eastlake.

"So does Clara. Come, old fellow, consider it settled and then think of a wife for yourself."

Therewith Vivian walked rapidly off, and wandered into the grounds—gardens you could



hardly call them. He encountered Earine and Clara. Looking at the former in a way which she well understood—for she knew the meaning of every glance of his eye—he addressed Clara:

"Miss Eastlake, do you know we are soon to have three marriages—all on the same day?"

"You don't mean it!" she exclaimed. "Who is going to be married? And when is it to be?"

"When depends on Sir Alured. He is going to marry Miss Sheldon—and on the day he fixes the other two will take place."

"And who are they? I can guess one."

"Can you? Which?"

"You and Miss Delisle."

"Right. We have made up our minds at last. At least I have—but I haven't asked Earine."

"But the third, Mr. Vivian, the third?" said Miss Eastlake. "Who can that be?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No, indeed, I can't."

"Can't you, Earine?"

"Well, I suppose it must be Mr. Powys and Clara," she replied.

"Oh, you naughty girl!" cried Clara. "Why, he has never said a word to me."

"Then it is quite time he did," remarked Vivian, "if he expects to be ready as soon as Sir Alured and I. Good-bye, ladies," he went on, with a significant smile for Earine; "I am just going to smoke a cigar with the Fellow of Oriel."

He descended to the Ferry Inn, and found Powys—who was obliged to give a few hours a day to Plays and Aldrich, to "Tottle and the son of Oloros—just emerging from his grind.

"Going up to Hawksmere?" asked Vivian, cheerily. "English with girls is pleasanter than Greek with boys."

"There is one young lady at Hawksmere," said Powys, "who knows more Greek than I do."

"Aye," replied Vivian. "She and I read Homer together in Homer's country, when she was a little girl in a crocus chitonion. And now we're going to be married. So, by-the-way, are my father and Miss Sheldon. Don't you think you could arrange your marriage for the same day?"

"My marriage!"

"Yes. You are going to marry Miss Eastlake, are you not? Of course you are. Let's all be married at Garthwaite together."

Powys looked bewildered, astounded, aghast. But it is an undeniable fact that he made a proposal to Clara Eastlake that very afternoon.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### LORD ALVESCOTT SWEARS.

*Master Stephen.* "Oh, he swears admirably!"

THE eleventh Marquis of Alvescott was getting disgusted with the Turf. He was one of the few men who keep race-horses for pure

amusement. He often made a bet in an amateur way; and, being a first-rate judge of horse-flesh, he generally won; but he had no desire either to make or to lose a fortune by betting. The year had been a bad one—and Lord Alvescott, being tired of the whole business, thought he would go to Baden for a change.

"If there wasn't any racing at Goodwood," he said to himself, "one got a quiet week. But now, confound it, the racing is worse than it ever was, and the railway brings down all kinds of cads and swindlers. On the Lawn, by Jove! I saw women that you may meet any night at Cremorne. I've a strong inclination to make a private course at Alvescott, and not admit a single individual to the park except by ticket."

It was while the Marquis was in this dissatisfied humor that the information reached him that Rupert Redfern had committed suicide. He was at his house in Park Lane when it arrived, pausing a day or two in town before he decided where to go next. The news put him in a frightful fury.

"He do cuss and swear most dreadful," said his valet to a young *cameriste* with whom he condescended to flirt. "He 'ave 'eard some bad news, I'm sure. I'm rather nervous, you know, Jemima—late hours and lots of iced sham makes a man nervous—and the Marquis, he do glare so sometimes that I fear some hact of violence."

At this point the bell rang loudly, so that Jemima had no time to console her nervous friend.

"Confound you, you idiot," said the Marquis, "why do you go away? Bring breakfast; and then take a cab, and drive like the devil to Lincoln's Inn, and tell Rogerson, my lawyer, he must come here directly. If he's not here by twelve, tell him I shall send for some other scamp, and take my business out of his hands. Come, waste no time."

The Marquis was wont to breakfast in a bay-window of his private room, overlooking the Park. There he would sit in his dressing-gown, betwixt the hours of eleven and twelve, and eat his cold grouse and drink his Mocha—he imported his own coffee—and swear over his letters. Seldom indeed did those letters bring him any news which he deemed pleasant. His trainer wanted money; his Derby favorite couldn't stay; his horses were unfairly handicapped, or otherwise unlucky. The Marquis always got into a fury over each successive piece of unsatisfactory news; but if he had not had such excitement, his life would have lost its greatest zest. Anger was his absinthie.

You may depend on it that the solicitor came swiftly on his employer's summons. Indeed he reached Park Lane considerably before the time, and found his lordship still at breakfast. He was rather more furious than ever, having received intelligence that a colt in training had broken down in his gallop.

"Sit down, Rogerson," he said. "Just look at this d—d letter. Not that—that's from

my trainer, curse him! You remember when my son-in-law died—Redfern of Broadoak—he was poisoned, you know. The confounded fools had the audacity to accuse my daughter of it; and the poor child was so worried that she died. Now it appears that Redfern, the infernal idiot, poisoned himself. Can't I have some revenge on them? Can't that fool of a coroner be hanged, or imprisoned, or something? They killed Eva—they are guilty of murder—can't you hit upon some way of punishing them? I don't care what it costs."

"There is no way, my lord," said Rogerson timidly, being as much alarmed as the valet by Lord Alvescott's angry glare. "The coroner and magistrates acted according to the law."

"Aye, that's the way. You lawyers are made safe. A fool or a rogue administers the law, and any foolery or roguery he likes to commit is safe enough. I shall go and find that coroner, and horsewhip him within an inch of his life."

"The man was only doing his duty, my lord," said Rogerson. "He could not help himself."

"My God!" exclaimed the Marquis, his face flushing with fury, "what will you tell me next? The hound killed my daughter by his stupidity. Ought he not to have known at once that she could not possibly have committed a murder? If these inquiries are of any use, they ought to bring criminals to justice, not to murder innocent persons. It's some time since I entered the House of Lords, but I'll go there next Session, and I'll ask from my place in Parliament the opinion of the nation on this question—*Are innocent women to be murdered because coroners are fools?*"

As he was thus lecturing the unlucky lawyer, a card was brought in:

Mr. Vivian.

After Lionel Redfern had written to the Marquis, it had occurred to Valentine that the result might be explosive. He resolved to start for town at once, and see Lord Alvescott; and Sir Alured and Catelan both encouraged the idea. So he got Eastlake to drive him to the station, and caught the 8 30 train, and was in London at that unearthly hour, 5 50 A.M. Being an old campaigner, he at once went to bed, and was called at eleven. And at about twelve he appeared in Park Lane, ready to calm the Marquis if possible. He was shown into the breakfast-room.

"This is the most law-ridden country in the world," said Lord Alvescott, when Vivian had explained his coming. "I have just been talking to this wooden-headed attorney of mine about poor Eva, and the scoundrels who killed her. He says there's no remedy. But just consider the absurdity of the thing, Vivian. A man dies of poison. All the old women in the county, coroner and magistrates and the rest, try to find out who did it. It never occurs to the d—d blockheads that he might have done it himself—that in fact most sensible men would

be glad to get out of a world full of such fools as they are. So, as there are two ladies living in his house, they accuse them of the murder. They suspect his wife, as innocent a creature as God ever created, simply because she nursed him in his last illness. They don't stop to ask why she should do such a wicked thing, or where she could have got the poison—they coarsely force their suspicions upon her, and the poor child breaks her heart over it. Murdered by d—d fools, sir—that's the record of her death. Then they suspect the other lady because she's a foreigner, and apparently a spy; and she is tried, and of course acquitted; but all the neighborhood still believes her guilty. What's become of that poor woman, Vivian? I'll settle a thousand a year on her, by Heaven!"

"Too late, my lord, she's dead—drowned on a boating trip."

"Sorry to hear it. But now, what's your opinion? My dolt of a lawyer says I can do nothing; and, when I talk of horsewhipping the fool of a coroner, declares he was doing his duty. As if it were a coroner's duty to commit murder!"

"Well, my lord," said Vivian, "I have no desire to defend either coroner or magistrate. You and I know Lady Eva better than they could. But I see no way to punish them; and I think it would be a great pity to cause any fuss. The truth will be known—the newspapers may possibly comment upon it, which of course we can not prevent; if they do so, they will probably make publicly known the coroner's stupidity. But I think the less any friends of Lady Eva's say about it, the better. Her memory is unstained. No good can be done by taking revenge on the poor coroner; coroners and magistrates will be fools to the end of time. Bring a bill into your House to extinguish these coroners, who are generally country surgeons, and these magistrates, who are generally small illiterate squires, and to substitute men of education—and you will do an immense amount of good."

"The bill wouldn't pass," said Lord Alvescott.

"No; it takes a few years to carry a good reform. And in this case the Commons would be reluctant. There are such a lot of people there who have made money by trade; this done, they buy an estate, get J.P. after their names, and in time M.P.; go to the Herald's Office for a pedigree, and set themselves up as members of the ancient aristocracy of England. It is quite right that people should rise in the world; but why should they become impostors the moment they are rich?"

"Well," said the Marquis, "I'll think about the bill. Rogerson, you can go—you never give me any advice worth paying for; I get better advice gratis, as you may see."

The lawyer was not sorry to retire.

"By-the-way, Vivian," said the Marquis, "I heard you were going to marry. I forget who told me. Is it so?"

"Yes."

"And the lady?"

"A Greek, whom I found in the *Ægean*, years ago. She was a child of about fourteen then."

"What do you know about her?"

"Why, that she is the most charming woman I ever saw—as beautifully simple as if she had lived in Homer's days."

"Exactly," said Lord Alvescott. "That is quite the true style. But I want to hear what you know of her family and her early life, and other matters of that sort. She did not drop from the clouds, I suppose."

"No," said Vivian. "My men found her in a boat which they overhauled in search of tobacco, and their impression was that she had been stolen."

"And could she tell you nothing?"

"Her memory was confused and bewildered. Besides, she knew no language but Greek, and it took me some time to make the Greek of Eton intelligible to her. Moreover, to say truth, I was not very inquisitive. The little girl had dropped upon my island, and was a nice plaything—and if I had made inquiries it might have appeared my duty to take her back to somebody or other."

"I see," said Lord Alvescott. "Your sense of duty deserves admiration. Do you know, I should like to see that young lady. I have taken a sudden interest in her. What is her name?"

"Earine."

"Do you think she has entirely forgotten her early life?"

"She has had plenty of adventure since; still, I should think her able to recall the days of her childhood. As I told you, I never troubled her much on the subject; and she has come to consider herself quite my property, and to forget that there may be other claims upon her. I found her a waif on the *Ægean* wave, and I picked her up and kept her. Have you any fancy in your head about her?"

"A fancy—yes. It is nothing more at present. But I have also been in the *Ægean*, and my fancy is the child may be my daughter. A little girl was stolen from me there."

"Do you know," said Vivian, "although her hair and eyes are light, I have often fancied a curious likeness in her expression to Eva." ●

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### BROADOAK MILL FARM.

"I think now, if I had my own sweet will,

And could command whate'er I chose to be,  
I'd be the miller at that Guy's Cliff mill

Whose rushing waters thunder like the sea,

Yet in the pool above lie hush'd and still,

Swept by sweet leaves. In that quaint balcony

I'd smoke cigars and listen to the water—

And Alfred Tennyson should court my daughter.

"I spent an afternoon a week ago

Haunting that vicinage. The departing swallow

Flash'd on the pool; brown shadows to and fro

Flickered, the wild caprices forced to follow

Of the low wind; a dust like summer snow

Floated around; the rhymer's friend, Apollo,

Could never paint the scene, or teach his fluttering

Harp-strings the tune those woods and waves were

uttering."

FARMER ASHOW was resolved to go home at once, and stopped but one night at Hawksmere. He longed to see his old homestead, and survey his stacks of wheat, and judge for himself as to the value of the harvest. But before he went he had an earnest talk with the Squire, and did his best to persuade him to come and live at Broadoak Manor. The old farmer was quite eloquent on the subject.

"You have been abroad ever so many years, Squire," said Farmer Ashow, "and you fancy you won't like settling down quietly in an English country house. But you'll find it uncommonly pleasant when you try. It's a fine thing, Squire, you may depend on it, to have lots of people living happily about you, on your own property. Look at me now; if you go away to Damascus, or somewhere, and never come nigh the Farm to see how the wheat looks, I shan't have half the pleasure in keeping the place up that I used to have. And when the fields are in stubble, why, it's a kindly sight to see the Squire and his friends out after the birds—and to welcome them to some cold meat and a tankard of sound ale for lunch. If you shut up Broadoak, or let it to some stranger—mayhap, some great cotton manufacturer that will look at farmers and laborers as if they were so much manure—why, the old place will never seem the same."

"Don't be afraid of the cotton manufacturer, Ashow," said Lionel Redfern. "I'll not let Broadoak, depend on it."

"I'm main glad to hear it, Squire. But come and live there—that's what you should do."

"But you know, Ashow, you talk of my looking at your wheat and shooting over your stable. I hardly know wheat from barley, and never shot a partridge in my life. So you see I should make a very poor hand at all that sort of thing."

"You'll soon learn wheat from barley, Squire, and a good crop from a bad. And if you don't care for shooting, your friends do. There's Mr. Vivian—he'll come and kill the partridges for you, I warrant. It's a pleasant healthy part, Squire—and there's a big library, and lots of famous pictures, and a glorious cellar of wine at Broadoak Avon—and the lasses about there are the prettiest in England, to my thinking."

"But the prettiest of them all is married, my friend. There's not another like your daughter in the county. However, I'll take your advice, and try how I like living at Broadoak."

"Thank ye, Squire," said the old farmer.

"You'll never regret it."

Home to the farm they went, the farmer and his son and daughter. Not devoid of melan-

choly was John Grainger's return. Notwithstanding the promises of the oculists, his eyes continued sightless; and, as he heard the well-known rush of the water over the mill-wheel, and pictured to himself the white dust floating in the air, he felt almost hopeless. Farmer Ashow had returned cheerily to his accustomed work; had soon traversed every acre of the farm, and ascertained for himself the progress of affairs; but John Grainger could give him no aid, and felt himself utterly useless. He wandered in lonely musing up and down the garden-paths, asking himself bitterly what he was to do. He felt a burden to himself, and to Mary, and to Mary's father.

But he found a wise counsellor in his trouble—and that was Lionel Redfern. I am obliged here to anticipate a little. When certain marriages had been solemnized, and the Hawksmere party had dispersed, the Squire fulfilled his promise to Farmer Ashow and came straight to Broadoak. He found more pleasure than he had expected in examining the treasures of the great house and the beauties of the great estate. He accepted Farmer Ashow's guidance, and took elementary lessons in agriculture. He visited Mrs. Grainger's dairy, and admired her presiding over its arrangements with bare white arms, and took tea with her at four o'clock—tea that was flavored with the cream from her favorite cow. He talked with John Grainger, discerned his despondent state of mind, discerned also his unusual activity of intellect. And thereupon he gave him some advice.

"Don't waste time in grieving," said the Squire. "Let us hope you will recover your sight, as the oculists expect. But in the mean time return to your old occupations—read, and think, and write."

"How can I read?"

"Have you not a wife, my young friend? Will she not be delighted to read to you as long as you please? If you choose a definite course of study, you need not tire her bright eyes by too much of it; and my library shall be always open to you, so that you will find ample material for your work. Again, you can make memoranda that will amply suffice for your purpose; and, when you have any thing important to set down, your wife can help you again."

"It will be hard work for her and me."

"Pshaw! don't be so easily depressed. Mrs. Grainger will delight in the occupation. And as to yourself, just remember what other men have done. Homer and Milton were blind—as I reminded you when we were driving over the fells to Hawksmere. One great mathematician was blind from his birth; and the best observer of the habits of bees was also blind. If you occupy yourself, and forget your natural longing for recovery, you are far more likely to recover. Come, resolve to throw off this melancholy, and make an attack on my library. You and Mrs. Grainger can go there whenever you please—I never read or write till after midnight."

And indeed the Squire's lamp shone through

the midnight hours with much regularity. He, with Thor, the great mastiff, at his feet, was wont to sit and study and muse till there was morning twilight in the sky. He loved the night—its calm, its silence, its suggestion. He loved to watch the magical effect of moonlight on the gardens and glades of Broadoak Avon. Likewise he loved the sky when strewn with stars—when absence of the imperial and imperious sunshine revealed something of the infinite universe. Lionel Redfern had studied the theologies of Asia, and the ontologies of Europe: he knew by heart the dogmata of Buddha and the antinomies of Kant; but he was wise enough to see how futile it is to fathom the unknowable which meets us at every point.

Great pleasure did he find at this period in being serviceable to his neighbors. Having conquered John Grainger's scruples, he installed him and his wife in the splendid library at Broadoak—he would go down to the Farm, and join Farmer Ashow, and take lessons from him in agriculture. Nor was this all. Rupert Redfern had administered his estate with kindly vigor, and knew every man and woman, every boy and girl, that lived upon his land, and took care to encourage those who deserved it, and to remonstrate with those who neglected their duty.

With Ashow's assistance, the new Squire soon rivalled his cousin. The lonely recluse of Damascus was transformed into an active English landlord. Mounted on a weight-carrying roan cob, six years old, that bore the appropriate name of Hercules, Squire Redfern visited all the outlying parts of his estate, and made intimate acquaintance with the people and the cattle, with the trees and the fields. He was himself amused to see how his interest in all these things grew and got hold of him. As to Farmer Ashow, he was perfectly delighted with the Squire, and thought the only thing he wanted was a wife.

"I do wish the Squire would marry, Mary," he would often say, as he smoked his pipe by the Avon side. "He's much too good a gentleman to live a bachelor."

With John Grainger the Squire had many stimulating talks, especially on topics metaphysical, whereto John had a predisposition. When a young student begins to analyze his own mind, he usually labors under the disadvantage that he knows little or nothing of any previous mental analysis. John Grainger was happily helped out of this difficulty by the Squire—who had read every thing worth reading on the subject, and much not worth reading, and who knew the old immemorial creeds as well as the newly-minted philosophies. So our young friend started fairly on his track; and, as he seemed to have some ideas on the matter that approached originality, the Squire encouraged him to write.

While John Grainger, with Mary's loving help, was beginning his great book, Lionel Redfern was also preparing to do something great. So long during the midnight hours had he watched the tranquil glory of the stars that

he longed to see them nearer. Why, he thought, should not England as well as Ireland have a mighty telescope; though Ireland, now so tortured a nation, was the home of literature when England was semi-barbarous? The Squire determined to erect a great telescope—to establish an observatory and a staff of astronomers. He had no mathematical knowledge of astronomy; but he knew its value, and desired to encourage it. Still, his true wish in the matter was to see his beloved stars nearer. As a man sees a lovely face across the glaring horse-shoe of a great theatre, and calls for an opera-glass to bring its lineaments into distinctness, so Lionel Redfern, having felt a passion for the stars from his early youth—a passion quickened and intensified when he beheld them in the clear depths of an Asian sky—called also for his opera-glass, in the form of a telescope more powerful than even Lord Rosse's.

Busy work there was in the park of Broad-oak Avon when a great astronomer had chosen the site, and planned the enterprise. The Squire and John Grainger were running a race—which would be ready first, the colossal telescope or the young metaphysician's book? Came at length the time for casting the mighty speculum—a process which I will not describe in ordinary prose, but in the noble verse of Ireland's great living lyrist, John Francis Waller:

"Oh! marvellous sight  
Of solemnizing grandeur! Lo, the Night  
Is deep and still, and conscious stars look out,  
And the broad moon shines bright.  
Forth on the air the furnace chimneys spout  
Columns' of yellow flame, and the red light  
From glowing crucible with quivering beam  
Plays, like a fiery fountain-stream,  
On ivied walls and castle towers,  
And deep umbrageous greenwood bowers.  
Then, hurrying to and fro,  
Swart metallurgists go,  
Pouring the liquid fire into the mould—  
Metal more precious far than virgin gold—  
And thus, while men hold in their breath for awe,  
The giant speculum at last  
With matchless skill is cast,  
Safe without fleck or flaw!"

Yes, such was the process, as beheld by a poet: and surely the description transcends any poor prose of mine.

The mighty instrument was fixed at last, and Lionel Redfern, looking down into that concave mirror of the concave sky, beheld the great procession of the stars in a form of which he had never dreamed. He saw worlds beyond worlds where there had been before nothing save a mist of luminous dust. He remembered Jean Paul's marvellous and terrible vision of space—whereof there is no end, whereof also there is no beginning. It has been said by an epigrammatic versifier that

"An undevout astronomer is mad,"

but really modern astronomy is enough to drive any man mad who realizes its revelations. Nothing is more certain than that there must be a limit to space, yet it is just as certain—and every additional discovery proves it—that there

can be no such limit. What an atom man is in this universe! It seems as though the whole solar system might any day be lost in the abysses of space, and nobody miss it.

John Grainger's great metaphysical work came out anonymously, just at the time the telescope was inaugurated. It was attributed to several famous writers. The most flippant and self-satisfied critics were of opinion that it put one or two old ideas in rather a new form. The "Edinburgh" reviewed it, and quoted Dugald Stewart and Sir William Hamilton; the "Quarterly" reviewed it, and quoted Plato. Few things are funnier than the cool assumption of all Scotchmen that they understand metaphysics. What should we say if all Welshmen claimed to understand Hebrew?

Dear me, how delighted was Mary with this big book of her husband's! She had copied out every line of it, and she did not understand a single word. But there it was, a book—a splendid book, indeed, of many hundred pages, with an immense amount of hard thinking compressed into each page. To think that John should be a great author! Mary was very proud.

So was her father. The old farmer knew very little about books, except the Bible and the Prayer-Book; but he had a fine ignorant veneration for the makers of books, and regarded his son-in-law as a singularly wise man. Thereunto he was the more disposed, because the Squire thought so much of the book. Farmer Ashow, without saying a word to any body, took the famous treatise to his bedroom one night, and tried very hard to discover what it was about. But the very first page was too much for him, and he wisely gave up the attempt.

All four members of our group had their triumph at about the same time. The telescope and the book were great facts, but Farmer Ashow felt equal satisfaction to that of his friends when his famous Southdowns carried away all the prizes at the Royal Agricultural Society's meeting at Riverdale, as a result of which, he sold his young rams for nearly as much a head as the yearlings at Eltham. However, it was admitted on all hands that Mary Grainger had the greatest success; for that young matron at the very same time became the mother of a boy, and every body agreed that he was the exact image of his father. Poor old John, who was consciously hideous, could only exclaim,

"I am sure I hope not."

It is requisite to pass to other scenes; let us therefore bid reluctant farewell to the dwellers at Broadoak Avon and at the Mill Farm. When Mary Grainger had John the Second to attend to, she somewhat lost her interest in metaphysics: so John the First, intent on another great work, was obliged to engage an amanuensis. He is plodding away at it with such intensity of purpose that he seems quite to have forgotten his loss of eyesight; let us

hope that Squire Redfern's theory is correct, and that perfect rest may prove a restorative. I am only afraid that if John's eyes should be suddenly opened—if he should again behold the blue sky, the yellow corn-fields, the green woods of Broadoak, the shining Avon—above all the loving rosy face of his wife and the strongly defined but as yet inelegant lineaments of his son and heir—I am afraid, I say, that he would toss metaphysics to the winds, and again become a hard-working farmer. Wherefore, as farmers are plentiful and metaphysicians few, perhaps it is as well that John Grainger should remain incurable.

Mary is a happy mother, and Farmer Ashow makes a capital grandfather—far better than could have been expected; the youngster's ridiculous likeness to his father is a matter of constant delight and astonishment to the old gentleman. Mary, however, who used to think John Grainger dreadfully ugly, thinks her son the handsomest boy that ever was born—which shows, young ladies, how tastes may change. And, if at this late period of my story I may pause to drop a word of advice, I should say, distrust your very handsome men. They are generally fools, and very often knaves. Their beauty of countenance fades into unmeaning stupidity at about forty—at which age also they usually become corpulent.

Lionel Redfern keeps up his staff of astronomers, rejoices in their discoveries, which he does not pretend to understand, and when he wants a little excitement, gazes down the vast tube, and sees the heavens somewhat nearer. But he does not forget the earth: and the great estate of Broadoak Avon is at least as ably administered—aye, and as kindly—as it was in the days of Rupert Redfern. Every body tells the Squire he ought to marry, if only to keep the property in the Redfern line; but this is a point on which he can not make up his mind. Of course he sees, when he goes into county society, many charming young ladies who would willingly accept the master of Broadoak, though his fifth lustrum is ended. But he is naturally dubious of this kind of young lady, and has a wild project of going off incognito somewhere, and trying to find somebody who will love him for himself, without any knowledge of his possessions. He has a kind of presentiment that he will meet the very creature he wants, some day or other—meet her at a railway station—perhaps, or in a train, or at a theatre, or in any other unexpected and irregular manner. This fixed idea is so well understood by his friends, that he never runs up to town to buy books or pictures, or across to Brighton for a whiff of sea-air, but Mrs. Grainger remarks to her husband,

"I wonder whether the Squire will bring home a wife *this* time."

## CHAPTER L.

## A TRIPLE WEDDING.

*Jaques.* "There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark."

Was it not a pleasant and humorous ending to the Fellow of Oriel's reading-party—this marriage to a lady whom he had so lately encountered? Rarely did his long-vacation pupils enjoy it: one of them, an intense admirer of Arthur Hugh Clough, put the story into spondaic hexameters of the roughest order. Reading-parties, you know, not unfrequently end in love—not so frequently, perhaps, in marriage. Besides Clough's evidence on the question, what sayeth our friend Mr. Cayley, in his brilliant but much-neglected poem, "Sir Reginald Mohun?" He takes his reading-parties to

" . . . Secluded  
Places in Wales or Scotland, where deluded  
Parents suppose they read: less credulous, we  
Believe they fish—shoot rooks with rifle-pea—  
Smoke many pipes—drink many quarts of beer—  
Yawn many weary yawns o'er problems few—  
And in the evenings play at whist or loo.  
Their tutor, fallen in love, is not severe;  
He met at church—ah, ruinous disaster!—  
The bright-eyed daughter of the village pastor:  
O'er Ovid's page, beside the streamlet clear,  
He dims his spectacles with fruitless tear."

But this is a Cambridge poet's account of the affair: our Powys was an Oxford man, and no fruitless tears bedimmed his spectacles.

Great were the doings on that merry morn when the three marriages were to be celebrated. There was no need to rise so early as when Colonel Trafford had to baffle his enemies and secure his Cecile. But a hospitable breakfast was spread in the hall, in preparation for the drive; and, strange to say, every body seemed to have an excellent appetite except Powys.

"Keep up your spirits," to him said Valentine, who was eating and drinking as if he enjoyed it. "Marriage is not a bit worse than having a tooth out."

Jack Eastlake's drag was once again found useful. Partly because it was a somewhat misty morning, partly to find room for some of the young Oxford men, the ladies travelled inside. It was arranged that they should not return to Hawksmere, but go straight on to the station, and thence start for their various destinations. Powys was to take his wife to Birklands, where Eastlake said he should leave them, and travel in search of a wife himself.

Emily Sheldon had set her heart on Trouville sur-Mer, and of course Sir Alured was obedient. As to Valentine and Earine, they longed to be on the water: wherefore, after his interview with Lord Alveascott, Vivian had run down to Cowes to look at a yacht which was advertised for sale; and, being satisfied with it, had sent for the faithful Mark Walsh to take charge, and have every thing ready.

Sir Alured and his son, with their brides, went on to London together, and stopped at the Colossus Hotel. The new Lady Vivian, who

wore her dignity very prettily, had to send her duenna back to America, not without a princely gift from Sir Alured. And Valentine had heard from Lord Alvescott, unexpectedly detained in London by a fit of the gout, and of course in an abominable temper. He wanted to see Earine, and have some talk with her about her childhood. She rather shrank from the interview, when Valentine explained what it meant.

"What can it matter," she said, "whose daughter I am? Those men stole me, I know. It is a very old Greek habit—don't you remember the *Amiral* who carried away Dionysus? That was why they sprang overboard when your men overhauled them: they fancied they were in pursuit of me."

"But do you remember your father?"

"I have no distinct recollection. He was a tall man, I think; but he must have gone away long before those sea-thieves carried me off. He could not have cared for me; why should I go and see him?"

"There is no very strong reason," said Valentine, "but I should like to please the old gentleman. He is my uncle, you know—if this is true, we are cousins, Earine."

They went. Lord Alvescott, after hearing Earine's story, felt assured of the relationship.

"I was obliged to come to England," he said to Vivian, "when the child was very young. I left her mother well provided for, and in good hands. But I was kept away much longer than I intended; and after a time received no news from Skyro. Then I went back, and found that the child had been stolen, and that her mother had died of grief. I could find no trace of the thieves."

The dates coincided perfectly: and the Marquis recollected that her mother had given her the pet name of Earine—though an orthodox priest had christened her Maria.

"She was married under the name of Earine Delisle," said Vivian. "We need not trouble ourselves or her with any thing further."

"Certainly not. Well, it's a singular coincidence, your finding a cousin in Greece. Tell me, where are you going to spend your honeymoon?"

"On the sea. I have bought a very nice schooner, and christened her *Earine*. She is lying at Cowes, and I hope to get down to-morrow."

"Not going to do any more piracy, I hope," said the Marquis, laughing. "You'll want to go ashore now and then. I've a palace in Genoa which you'll find pleasant, if you like to take possession of it. 'Tis on the shore—with gardens at least as beautiful as those of the *Doria*, though not so large. I never saw such oleanders and myrtles and orange-trees. You'll be glad of a place of repose if you are going to knock about in a small schooner."

"She's a couple of hundred tons," said Vivian, "and, I hear, very comfortable. And as to repose, I agree with the poet—

"Ah, surely on the sea is rest!

Toll on the mainland, rest upon the main."

But the palace at Genoa sounds invitingly—I won't refuse your offer; and perhaps you'll come and pay us a visit there."

"Don't expect me. My trainer and my gout keep me at home. Good-bye. I am glad to have seen Earine—she certainly has a likeness to poor Eva."

Two nights in London, when London was empty, were quite enough for the Vivians. The Colossus Hotel, so crowded and vivacious in the season, was absolutely desolate. When lady Vivian looked into the ladies' drawing-room, its emptiness made her feel quite melancholy. London was emptier than usual this particular year—all the world had taken flight, except only those hapless slaves who have to earn their living in the metropolis.

Sir Alured was very glad to be off: his son was eager to see his yacht: and the two parties started from Waterloo by the same train. The Baronet was to take the Havre steamer at Southampton; his son thought he might as well go the same way, and get to the island by Southampton Water. So at the old Hampshire port father and son parted company.

What manner of place is Trouville? Can I do better than quote the words of Mr. Blanchard Jerrold in his witty preface to the brochure which he has dedicated to the Norman watering-places. Somebody compared it with Scarborough.

"Scarborough! The place is lovely—but it would be absolutely ridiculous to compare the society of the two places. One is a drawing-room, the other a mixed meeting. Good people *do* go to Scarborough; but *only* good people go to Trouville. Empty the grand tier of our Opera on a Drawing-room night upon the sands of Broadstairs, and shut every body else out, and you will have an idea of the scene on the sands, by the little Touques."

At such a charmingly patrician rendezvous did not our American bride cause a sensation? Verily she did. Nobody was so beautiful; nobody so witty; nobody dressed with such infinite variety, yet always well; nobody wore such brilliant jewelry. Sir Alured let his wife have her own way, and was much amused by her hearty enjoyment.

They stopped at the *Roches Noires*, for all the best private houses were already taken; those bizarre edifices, mansions and maisonnettes, are snapped up at a very early date in the year.

"Non culvis homini contingit adire Corinthum:"

and it is not worth while to visit Trouville unless you have unlimited command of wealth. It is the very place for the purse of Fortunatus to be useful. Its charming capricious dwellings are perfection: the gayer gods of Olympus might choose such residences for a sea-side holiday—or the choicest society of Athens, when Alcibiades was wooing Glycera, and Aristophanes writing comedy.

"When," writes Mr. Jerrold of Trouville, "I think of Kemp Town, and then glance along this terrace shore, I realize vividly the difference between England and France. I see how deep artistic feeling is in the Frenchman's nature; and how, with us, it is the gift of the few. Our unbroken and sad terrace fronts are inexpressibly heavy and dull. You imagine the life behind these stucco walls as compacted of hard duties and sullen activities, and with a game at backgammon for its most phrensied pleasure. They are the homes designed for the people who amuse themselves sadly. Here the houses seem to laugh at the dancing waves." And so do the people. And so, be well assured, did lovely Emily Vivian, the lightest dancer in the Casino, the brightest dresser on the *plage*. The refined and fantastic gayety of the Trouville society, to which Sir Alured Vivian's name found for him immediate entrance, delighted his bride. And the old man renewed his youth, walked with firmer tread than ever, and the unquenched fire of his eyes grew brighter than before.

That Lady Vivian had been an actress was no reproach to her with the great ladies of the Empire who were bathing and lounging at Trouville. France is in this regard superior to England, that art and letters are passports to the highest society. In this country, the peer or the millionaire thinks he does a good action if he *patronizes* author or artist: in France the patronage is rather the reverse way, and genius is more readily recognized than rank or money. The reason doubtless is that the Revolution broke in France those chains of caste that still exist in England—chains which, once shattered, can never be re-forged. Since that time politics, instead of being the recognized profession of noblemen and rich mercantile men, as in this country, has been a vocation of men of letters. Besides, under the Empire, politics can hardly be said to have any life: hence modern French society, unagitated by the sordid contest of parties, seeks its supply of ideas from literature and art.

Although, however, Lady Vivian mixed pleasantly enough with the cream of Paris, Sir Alured met with one incident which annoyed him. A couple of young Englishmen, of the Brown and Jones type, had stumbled on Trouville, where they felt like fish out of water. They knew nobody. They dared not approach the gay group of ladies on the *plage*; they eyed at a respectable distance the celebrities—princes and generals, singers and romancers—whose names were heard in the atmosphere. They were young City men of some sort—what sort I can not pretend to say. Says Brown to Jones, at last,

"I vote we get away from this beastly hole. There is nobody here to speak to?"

But Jones's evil destiny kept him a day longer: and that very evening, as the pair stood on the terrace in front of the Casino, Sir Alured and Lady Vivian passed, with a group of other ladies and gentlemen.

Brown asked him if he knew who Lady Vivian was.

"Should think I do," said Jones coarsely. "A sly little Yankee actress, who coaxed that old fool of a baronet to marry her. A regular bad lot, in my opinion."

Jones was a great follower of ballet-girls, and loved to air his diamond rings behind the scenes.

He had spoken too loud, and Sir Alured caught what he said. He was in a fury. Lady Vivian, who was chattering away at a great rate with one of her friends, passed on into the Casino; Sir Alured turned back, struck Jones lightly with his cane, and handed him his card.

"You will find me at the *Roches Noires*," he said, and followed his companions.

The unlucky Jones was stupefied.

"What's a feller to do?" he said to Brown.

"He means fighting a duel. Why, I couldn't fight with an old gentleman like that: he's more than seventy."

From the days of Sir Lucius O'Trigger and Bebb Acres to the era of the heroic Winkle, it has been noticed that the second in a proposed duel feels somewhat differently from the principal. The spirit of Snodgrass rose in the intrepid breast of Brown, and he told his friend that it would be impossible to spare Sir Alured Vivian by reason of his age. It was evidently his duty to challenge him—he, Brown, would carry the message.

"Think of the *eclat* when you get back, old fellow, of having fought a duel with a real swell. I only wish it was me."

So did Jones, but he did not say so.

"Are you a good shot?" asked Brown.

"Never let off a pistol in my life."

"What a pity! Can you fence?"

"I used to learn single-stick at school. Don't your arms and legs get knocked about?"

"That's not fencing," said the sagacious Brown. "But I think swords will be safer than pistols. I dare say the old gentleman has practised, and would fire clean through you at twelve paces."

Jones shuddered. However, Brown and his sense of honor kept him up, and they retired to their hotel, where, with the aid of brandy, an epistle was concocted, which Sir Alured was to receive from Brown the next morning. It was too late for delivery that night. Brown, I have reason to believe, slept much better than Jones.

Sir Alured Vivian had just come down to breakfast when the messenger of quarrel arrived. He was standing at a balcony, watching for the return of the hotel bathing-party. His wife, whose graceful ease in the water was a fertile theme of admiration among her Parisian friends, was commonly known as *la sirène*. He could see her gayly advancing along the perfect sands, with a whole choir of sea-nymphs following her. He pleasantly smiled at the sight.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," said the waiter.

He turned, and looked down at Brown, who



was rather short, and took the note which he offered him. Having read it, he said,

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. The waiter will show you to my friend, Colonel Ribaut, who knows what has occurred."

He walked out to meet his wife, while Brown was shown to the Colonel. The English of the one was about as scanty as the other's French; but as the affair was simple enough, they contrived to arrange it.

"All right," said Brown, pleasantly, as he entered the Hôtel Bellevue, where his friend sat before an untasted breakfast. "To-morrow morning at six, on the sands, with swords."

"There won't be light enough," said Jones, helplessly.

"Quite enough to fight by. Hang it! I'm awfully peckish. They get better breakfasts at that swell hotel than we do here. I wish we had gone there."

"It would have been awfully expensive," said the duellist.

It was rather dark next morning at six on those gray sands, with a mist hovering above the sea. It was cool, also, and by no means cheerful, when the two young City men came down to the beach. Sir Alured, by this time, was sorry he had taken any notice of his opponent's vulgarity, but he was apt to act without thought.

"This is a mere farce," he thought to himself, "going out with a fellow who is probably some shopkeeper's son. I shall be laughed at if any body knows it."

Well, the opponents were placed. Jones had not the remotest idea what to do with his rapier. Sir Alured disarmed him in an instant, then, according to courteous custom, picked up the weapon and presented it to him.

But Jones would go no farther.

"I ought to apologize, Brown," he said. "I know it's the right thing to do. I am very sorry indeed, Sir Alured, that I said a word in disparagement of Lady Vivian."

"I accept your apology," said Sir Alured, coolly. "Good-morning, gentlemen."

And therewith he and the Colonel walked back to the *Roches Noires*, both heartily wishing that they had not got up so early.

As to the two City men, they left Trouville that day, extremely sorry that they had ever trodden its seductive sands.

There is a city of England which for beauty has few equals anywhere—a city which has been greatly beloved by poets, as Walter Landor, and by originals, as William Beckford. In the most splendid crescent of that city of Bath Sir Alured Vivian had a magnificent house, and he proposed to go thither for the winter, after leaving Trouville.

"A week at Paris on our way home, I suppose, Emily, in order to get the latest fashions. Then next year we'll take London in the season, and afterwards, if you like, go into Italy for a change. I wonder how Valentine will be getting on by that time."

"How shall we be getting on?" asked Lady Vivian, laughing.

"Very well, I should hope. But do you agree to my projects?"

"Of course I do. I should like to see all sorts of places. In America, you know, there is nothing old, and nothing refined or elegant. I was once at Saratoga—but oh it is such a wretched place if you compare it with Trouville!"

Sir Alured Vivian had as yet seen no reason to repent his rash experiment. His girl-wife seemed by no means weary of him, and her companionship had made him feel younger than he had felt for years. The ladies of Trouville had been delighted with him—such a combination of experience with vigor, and in a *grand seigneur*, was quite a novelty. He put all the young men out of fashion; and, if there had been only a few other men of his standing, capable of following his example, the ladies of France would unquestionably have decided that seventy was the exact age at which a gentleman might hope to be a successful lover.

## CHAPTER LI.

### AMONG THE OLEANDERS.

"Cool-smelling oleander loves the stream,  
And bends ripe roses over it."

It is the custom, or has been, in certain countries, for a bride to let her hair flow free over her shoulders. Earine could not have fallen in with this fashion—her short bright hair curled boyishly around her shapely head. She might, if dressed for the character, have been mistaken for young Apollo, in the days when he kept the sheep of Admetus. Of the three brides she certainly was loveliest, in the eyes of those who admire intelligent and poetic beauty. Marvellously (thought Vivian) had she developed from the little girl in the chitonion whom Mark Walsh brought home one memorable day.

The yacht *Earine* was lying at Cowes, and in ship-shape order. Mark Walsh had done his duty promptly and well. Abundant stores had been taken in, and the cabins were cosily furnished for a bridal trip.

"Really," said Earine, "this is charming. It is like the old days over again, only without their troubles."

"Aye," replied Vivian, "those troubles are over, let us hope. Mark, if all's ready, we'll get away at once. I want to see how the yacht sails; and I want to get out of sight of England. Bring up some wine, Mark, and let us drink to the good fortune of the two Earines."

So Vivian and Earine sat in the stern, and the auspicious draught was drunk, and the schooner, with a favoring wind, soon dropped the green shores of the Wight, and made good speed down Channel. Verily the yachtsman has a happy time of it. He is free from all the worries that cling to the land like limpets to

their rock; he escapes from the fetid air of cities, from the frightful noises which haunt one everywhere. Noise is one of the greatest torments of the human brain. Men live in the midst of noise till they become unconscious of its excruciation—till, if they were placed amid perfect silence, it would be almost painful to them; but the noise is no less harmful because the ear forgets it. The maddening roar of crowded streets, the hideous combination of shriek and scream, and throb and groan, which railway travelling produces, the distracting talk of fools who have nothing to say yet think it uncivil to be silent—these are some of the things which make life a burden to men of delicate brain. You can shut your eyes against newspapers and bad novels and ill-dressed women: but you can not shut your ears against noise. The very etymology of the word shows what our ancestors thought of it; it comes from the old verb to *noy* (we now use *an-noy*), so that noise is the one thing preëminently noisome.

Now the yachtsman can leave all this behind, and steer into the realms of silence. The wind in the shrouds makes music, and so does the hissing of the keel through the waters. And the sense of perfect freedom—the knowledge that you can have no troublesome letters, that no bores can call, that you are beyond the reach of dull debates in Parliament and police perjuries and breach of promise cases! Free as a bird of the air, you wander at your own sweet will, and trouble yourself about no other creatures save the crew of your tiny craft. It is the sublimity of selfishness. Poor dear stout Dr. Johnson compared a ship to a prison, with a chance of being drowned. He loved Fleet Street—itself a prison to many men, with a certainty of being starved or poisoned or worried to death.

By-and-by, on board your yacht, the unimaginable sunset is spilt upon the wine-colored sea. You watch it, smoking placidly in the stern, with your lady-love's head quiescent on your stalwart shoulder. Then gradually the west grows gray, and the stars come one after the other into sight, and the air feels somewhat chill. You go below. The swinging lamps are lighted in your cabin; your favorite books are on their shelves. There is a piano, of course, for dainty fingers to touch, and fragrant tea or stimulant wine is ready for consumption. A happy pair were Vivian and Earine when they went below. Of course there was supper: 'tis a maritime meal, though dyspeptic on land: you rock so much in your berth, that it secures digestion.

And after that Vivian lighted his pipe, and said,

"Read to me, Earine."

And the beautiful Greek-English girl took from the shelf a mighty volume, and asking no questions whatsoever, began to read—

"Μνήσσομαι οὐδέ λήθωμαι Ἀπόλλωνος ἱκάντου...."

One piece of advice I venture to give to yachts-

men. Let them take with them none but good books: let them resolutely banish from their sea-library trashy novels and comic literature. If, in lazy mood, they take to this class of reading, they are too apt to go on with it, thereby losing an infinite enjoyment. Nothing is so delicious as reading pure literature—especially poetical literature—amid the suggestive solitude of ocean. The mind has freer action, the spirit has loftier flight, upon Poseidon's element.

"Where do you think of going, Valentine?" asked Earine that night.

"In and out among the Mediterranean islands," he said. "I want to land on Corsica, and see Isola Rossa, and climb Monte Rotondo. Then I thought of a visit to Sicily, and of climbing *Ætna*—but not of playing *Empedocles*. And then we'll run round Cape Matapan, and in among the delicious sprinkled isles, and visit our own islet, and see who occupies those dear cool marble chambers. Shall we?"

"It is a delightful project," she said. "But I have a fancy that I should like to see this palace at Genoa which my father offers us (for he is my father, I think) before the winter sets in. Could we not go there first, and then to Corsica?"

"Of course we can. Yes, child, I think there is little doubt that Lord Alvescott is your father, and that you are my cousin. I am glad that you should be my cousin, as well as my wife."

So they went first to Genoa. The Marquis had not exaggerated the beauty of the palazzo and of the gardens. It was a quadrangle—all of the whitest marble—built round a court-yard with a fountain in its centre; three stories high—with all the best rooms on the upper story, to get air and coolness. And on the flat roofs there were gardens (a Genoese custom) with oleanders and myrtle, orange and lemon and citron and anana-trees of prodigious size, and fountains playing everywhere. It was an enchanted paradise of cool waters and sweet flowers. Then the gardens outside the palace sloped to the sea; and a stream ran through them, its banks fringed with pale red oleander bloom; and there was a tiny bay of the great Gulf of Genoa, wherein the *Earine* could lie easily at anchor.

When Vivian found himself here with Earine, the magic and mystery of the place detained him. He grew poetical. He resolved to surpass *Don Juan* in the same style—a style which Byron got from Pulci, and which seems natural to Italy. Meanwhile, until he could plunge headlong into this ocean of rhyme, he dallied awhile in shallower water. Here is an idyl which he read one divine afternoon to Earine. They were lying beneath cool-smelling oleanders, thirty feet high, upon emerald turf that was fragrant with cyclamen.

"He sat the quiet stream beside—  
His white feet laving in the tide—  
And watched the pleasant waters glide  
Beneath the skies of summer."

She singing came from mound to mound,  
Her footfall on the thymy ground  
Unheard; his tranquil haunt she found—  
That beautiful new comer.

He said—"My own Glycerium!  
The pulses of the woods are dumb,  
How well I knew that thou wouldst come,  
Beneath the branches gliding."  
The dreamer fancied he had heard  
Her footstep, whencesoever stirred  
The summer wind, or languid bird  
Amid the boughs abiding.

She dipped her fingers in the brook,  
And gazed awhile with happy look  
Upon the windings of a brook  
Of Cyprian hymnings tender.  
The ripples to the ocean raced—  
The flying minutes passed in haste:  
His arm was round the maiden's waist—  
That waist so very slender.

O cruel Time! O tyrant Time!  
Whose winter all the streams of rhyme,  
The flowing waves of love sublime,  
In bitter passage freezes.  
I only see the scrambling goat,  
The lotos on the waters float,  
While an old shepherd with an oat  
Pipes to the autumn breezes."

In such amorous fantasies did they pass the pleasant hours among the oleanders of Genoa, until it became too late to think of the cruise to many islands. So the yacht took them to Rome, where they enjoyed the winter, and met much pleasant society. Nor was it till the following summer that the white sails of the *Earine* were seen among *Ægean* islands. Their own especial islet was deserted; the wild goats were nesting in the marble chambers; there was no sign of human habitation.

"Never mind, *Earine*," said Vivian. "If we are weary of the West, we can come here out of the way of the world, and make our own happiness."

"I am happy anywhere—with you," she replied.

What an old-fashioned sentiment! And how pleasantly it falls upon the ear, notwithstanding its antiquity!

If, in the autumn after this cruise, one could have dropped in at the Genoese palazzo, it would have been to meet several old friends. Luckily it is a roomy edifice, or there could by no means have been found accommodation for so many. Lord Alvescott was there, and Sir Alured and Lady Vivian (as yet untired of each other), and Colonel Trafford and Cecile, with a noisy young son and heir, and M. Catelan, appointed god-father, as a small token of gratitude for having rescued Mrs. Trafford's property from the Philistines. But Mrs. Powys had special reasons for not coming, and her husband and father were in close attendance upon her.

There was, however, one new guest, who arrived last of all. Whence he came it might be dangerous to say, in these days of dubiety: though I am inclined to agree with the great poet whom I knew and loved in my youth, that

"Trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home."

Whencesoever he came, he was extremely welcome, and it was determined that he should bear the name of

ALURED VIVIAN.

But the full harvest-moon is just climbing to its zenith, and I think it is well-nigh time to lay down my pen.

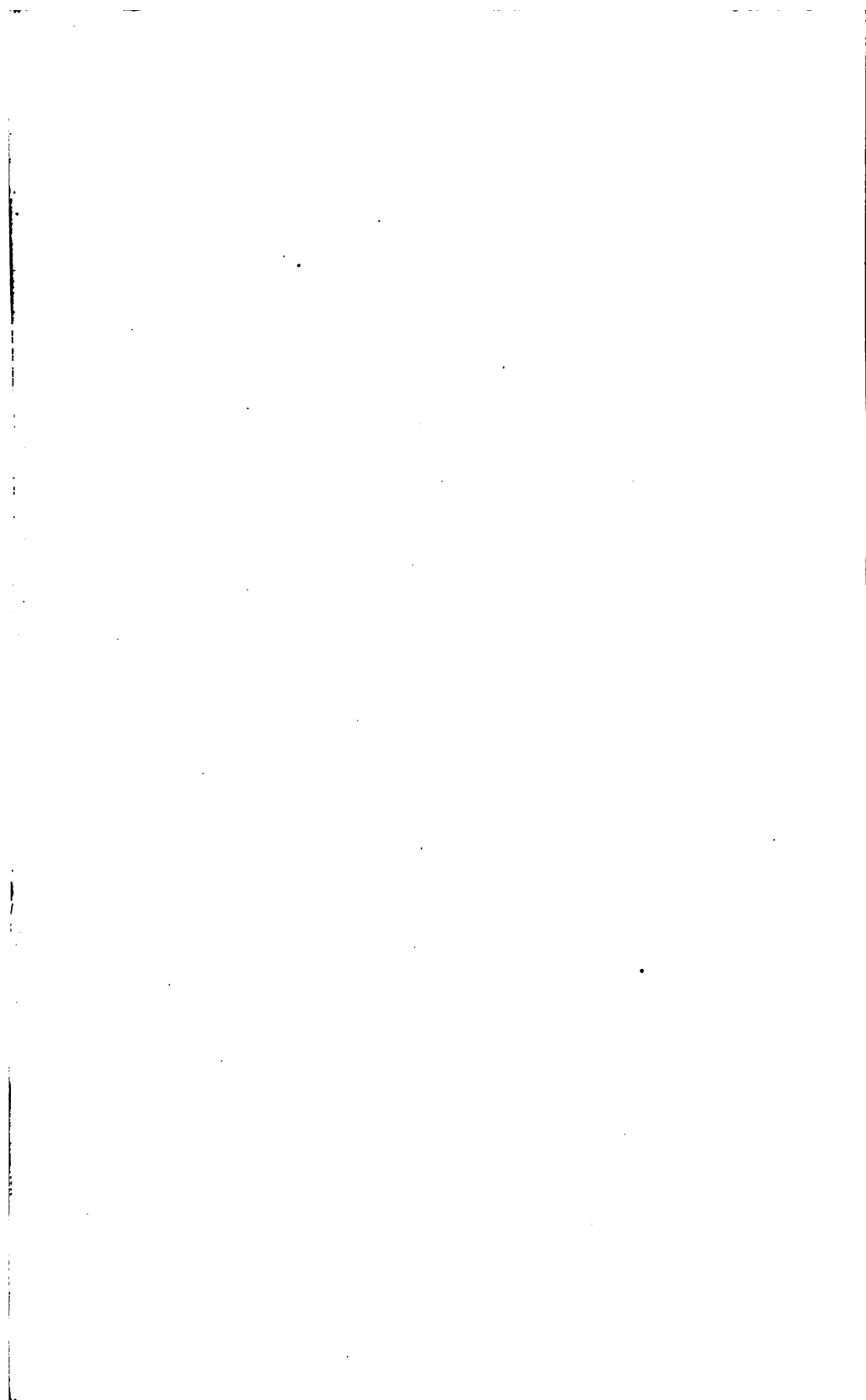
THE END.

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